

The WHISPERING DEATH

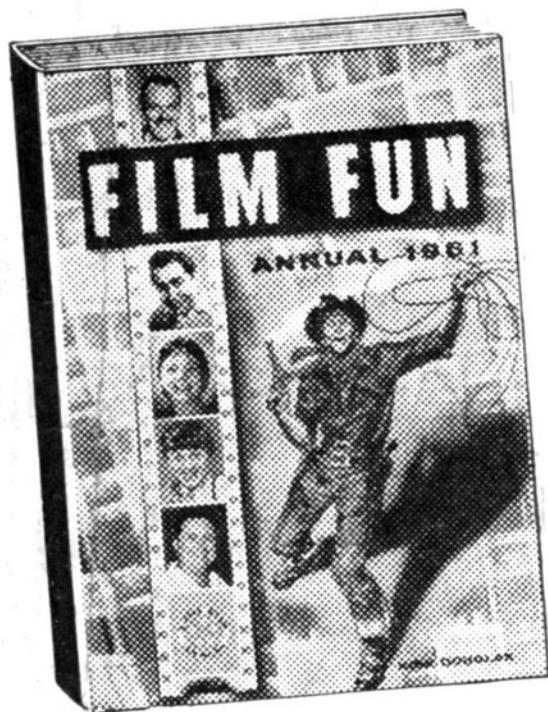


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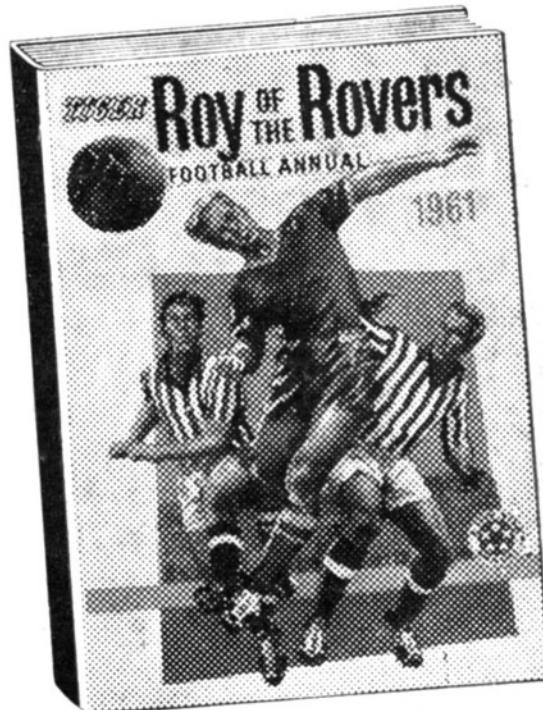
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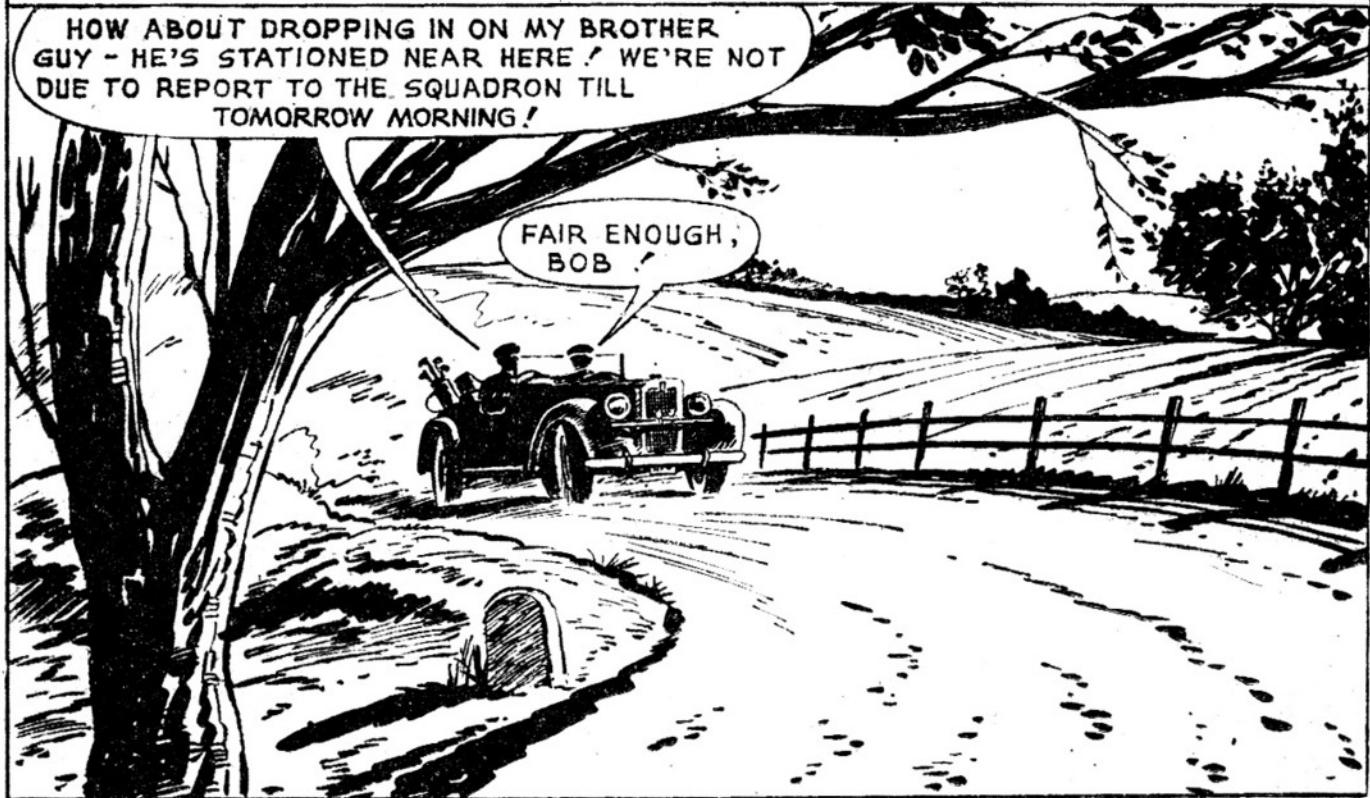
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IN THE YEAR 1943, THE "BATTLE OF THE RUHR" THUNDERED TO ITS FINAL STAGES. AS BOMBER COMMAND POUNDED THE GREAT RUHR CITIES, THE ENEMY FOUGHT BACK SAVAGELY WITH FLAK AND NIGHT FIGHTERS - TWO DEADLY WEAPONS AGAINST WHICH NEW TECHNIQUES WERE CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTED. BUT WITH EVERY SUCCEEDING RAID, THE HAZARDS BECAME GREATER . . .

Chapter 1. GAUNTLET of FLAK

PILOT OFFICER BOB DANVERS AND HIS NAVIGATOR, PILOT OFFICER ANGUS ROBERTSON, WERE ON THEIR WAY FROM AN OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT TO THEIR NEW SQUADRON...



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IT WAS NO TIME TO PAY A SOCIAL CALL BUT NEVERTHELESS, IT CHEERED GUY DANVERS TO SEE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. THEY WALKED OUT TO THE WAITING HALIFAX . . .

I SAY, GUY, COULD I WANGLE A TRIP WITH YOU ?

YOU MUST BE MAD, BOB ! IT'S NOT A CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP WE'RE GOING ON . . .



BOB DANVERS COULD ALWAYS GET ROUND HIS BROTHER BUT THE PILOT OF THE HALIFAX WAS NOT SO EASY... YET HE GAVE IN BEFORE THE NEW YOUNG PILOT'S OBVIOUS ENTHUSIASM .

IT SEEMS TO ME YOUR BROTHER'S FLAK-HAPPY, DANVERS ! OKAY ! HE CAN COME, BUT KEEP HIM OUT OF THE WAY ! YOU'LL HAVE TO HURRY IF YOU'RE GOING TO KIT HIM UP .

THANKS,
SKIPPER !

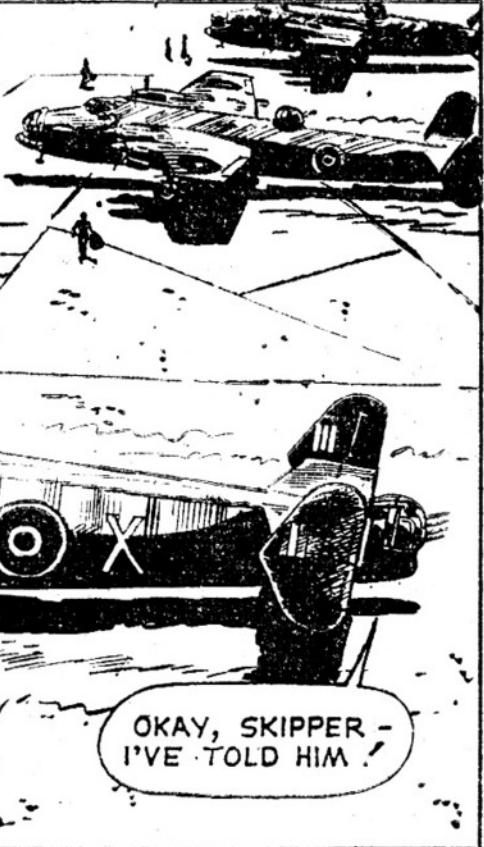


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ANGUS ROBERTSON WATCHED THE BOMBER FORCE PREPARE TO LEAVE WITH MISGIVINGS FOR HIS FRIEND . . .

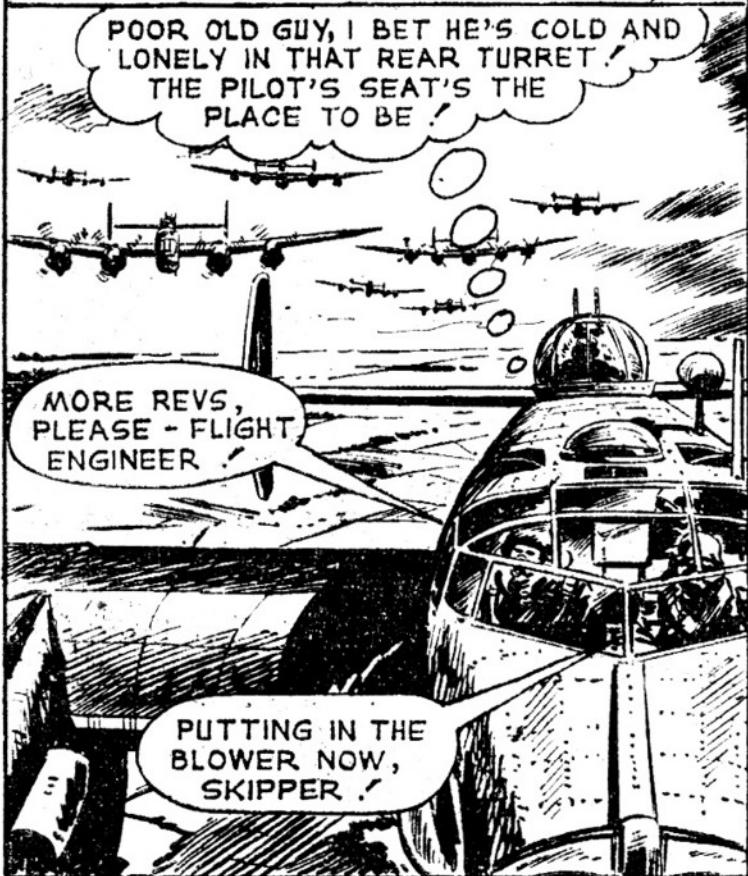
I CAN'T HELP FEELING BOB'S STICKING HIS NECK OUT BEFORE HE NEEDS TO!

PILOT TO CREW, TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT. DANVERS, TELL YOUR BROTHER - NO UNNECESSARY TALK ON INTERCOMM! FROM NOW ON IT'S STRICTLY BUSINESS!



AS THE BOMBERS SET COURSE FOR THEIR RENDEZVOUS POINT, BOB STOOD BEHIND THE PILOT AND THE FLIGHT ENGINEER . . .

POOR OLD GUY, I BET HE'S COLD AND LONELY IN THAT REAR TURRET. THE PILOT'S SEAT'S THE PLACE TO BE!



BOB FELT THE TREMENDOUS SURGE OF POWER AS THE SUPERCHARGERS BOOSTED THE WHINING MERLIN ENGINES . . .

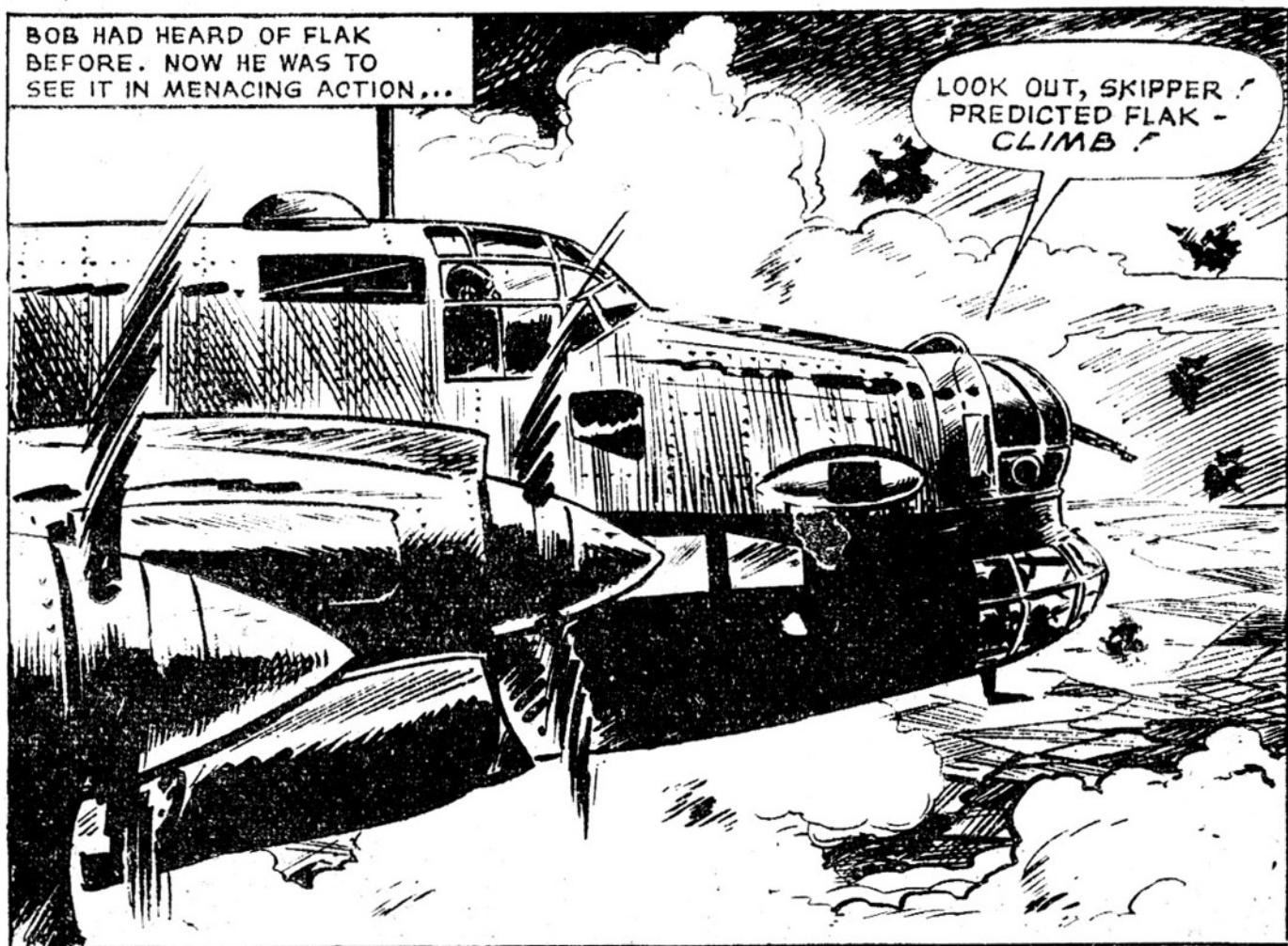
WE'RE CROSSING THE ENGLISH COAST! CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT AGAIN! GUNNERS, TEST GUNS!

OKAY, SKIPPER!

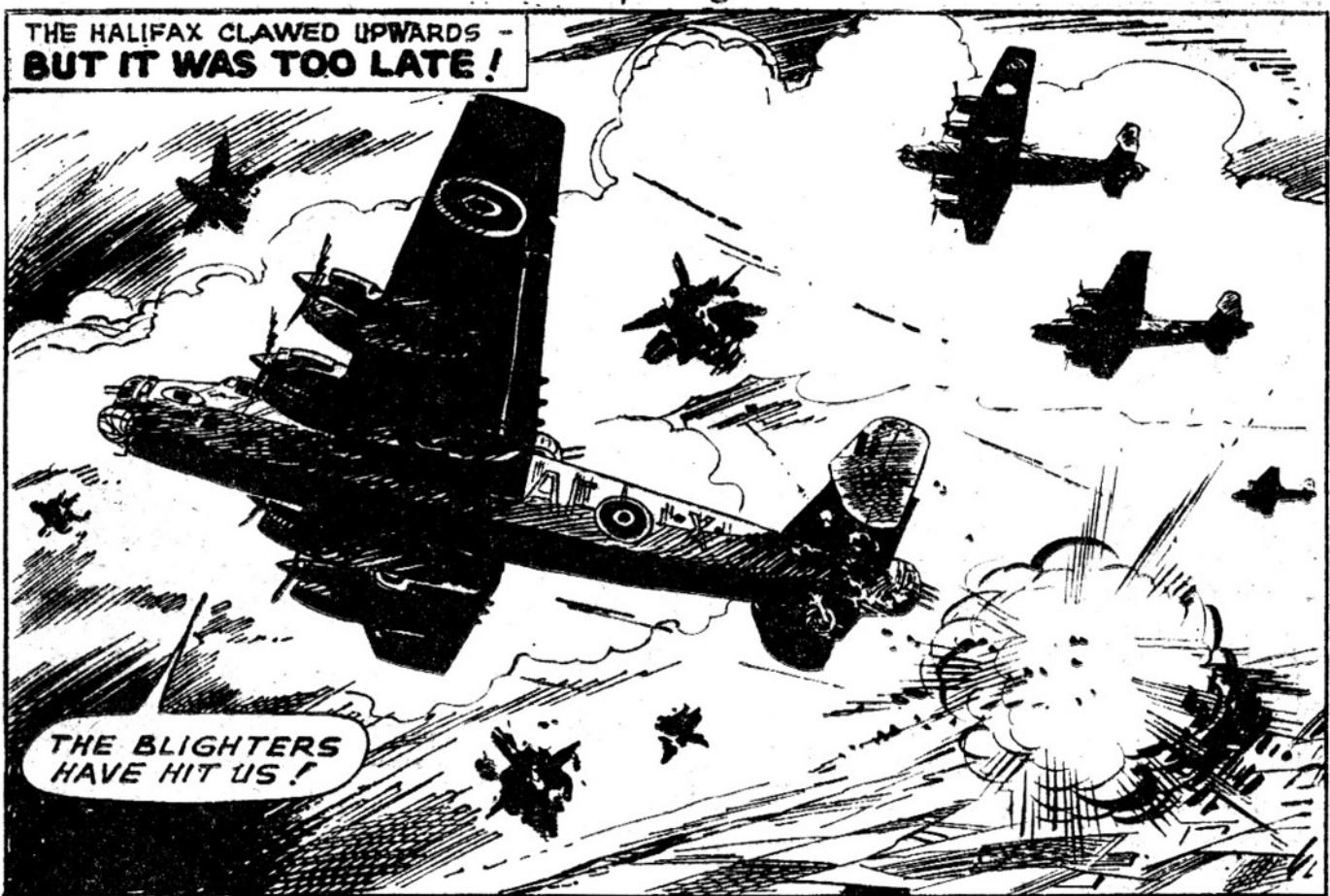


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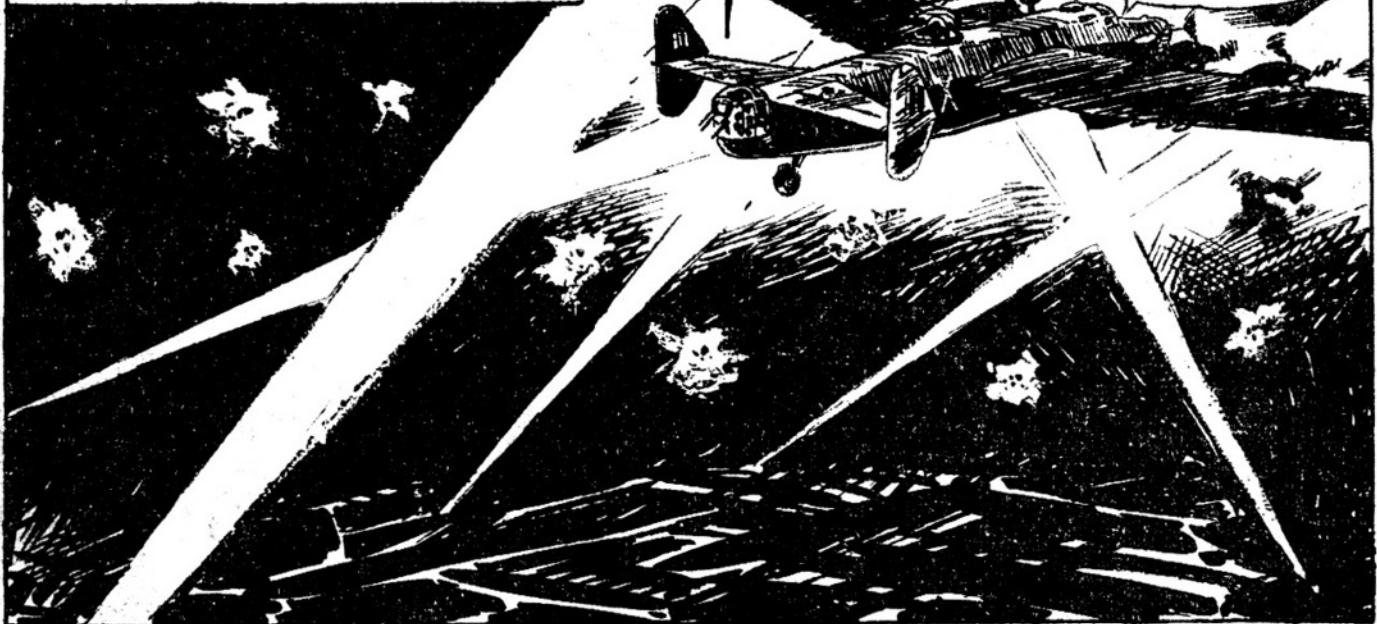


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THE TARGET WAS ONLY A FEW MILES AHEAD BUT IT ONLY NEEDED ONE OF THE SCORE OF BLUE MASTER SEARCHLIGHTS TO TOUCH THEM TO DRAW A CONE ON TO THE LIMPING HALIFAX ...

LOOK OUT, SKIPPER, BLUE SEARCHLIGHT MOVING IN ON US FROM PORT QUARTER!

OKAY,
REAR GUNNER...
WATCH IT!

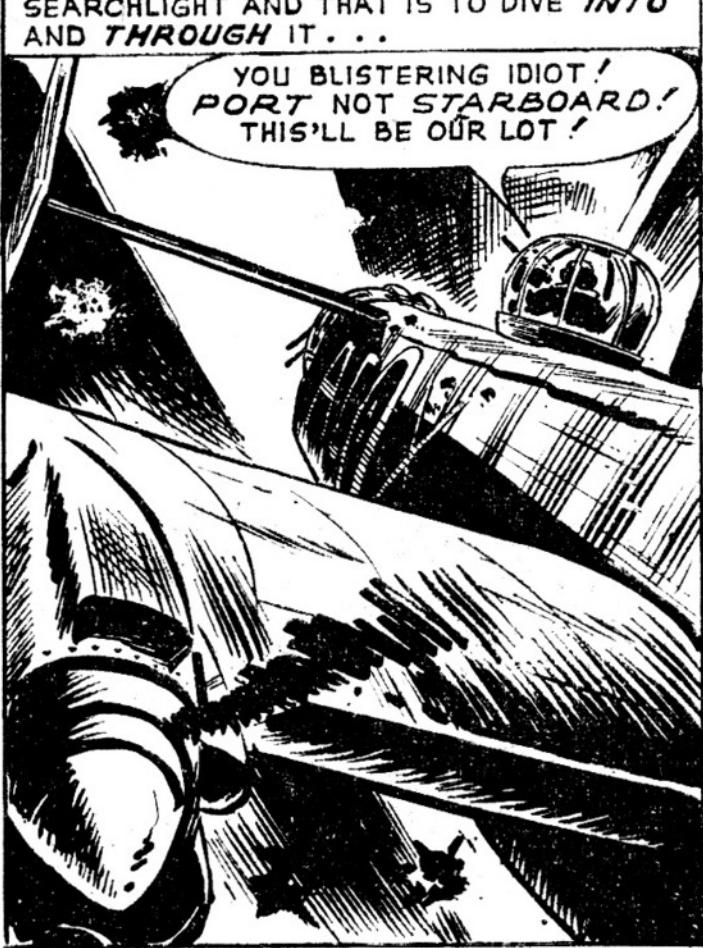


BUT THE TECHNIQUE OF STAYING ALIVE UNDER ENEMY SKIES WAS NEW TO BOB. HE MADE AN ELEMENTARY MISTAKE ...

BOB DID NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO ESCAPE AN APPROACHING SEARCHLIGHT AND THAT IS TO DIVE INTO AND THROUGH IT ...

YOU BLISTERING IDIOT!
PORT NOT STARBOARD!
THIS'LL BE OUR LOT!

SEARCHLIGHTS
CLOSING IN! PREPARE
TO DIVE TO STARBOARD
... DIVE!



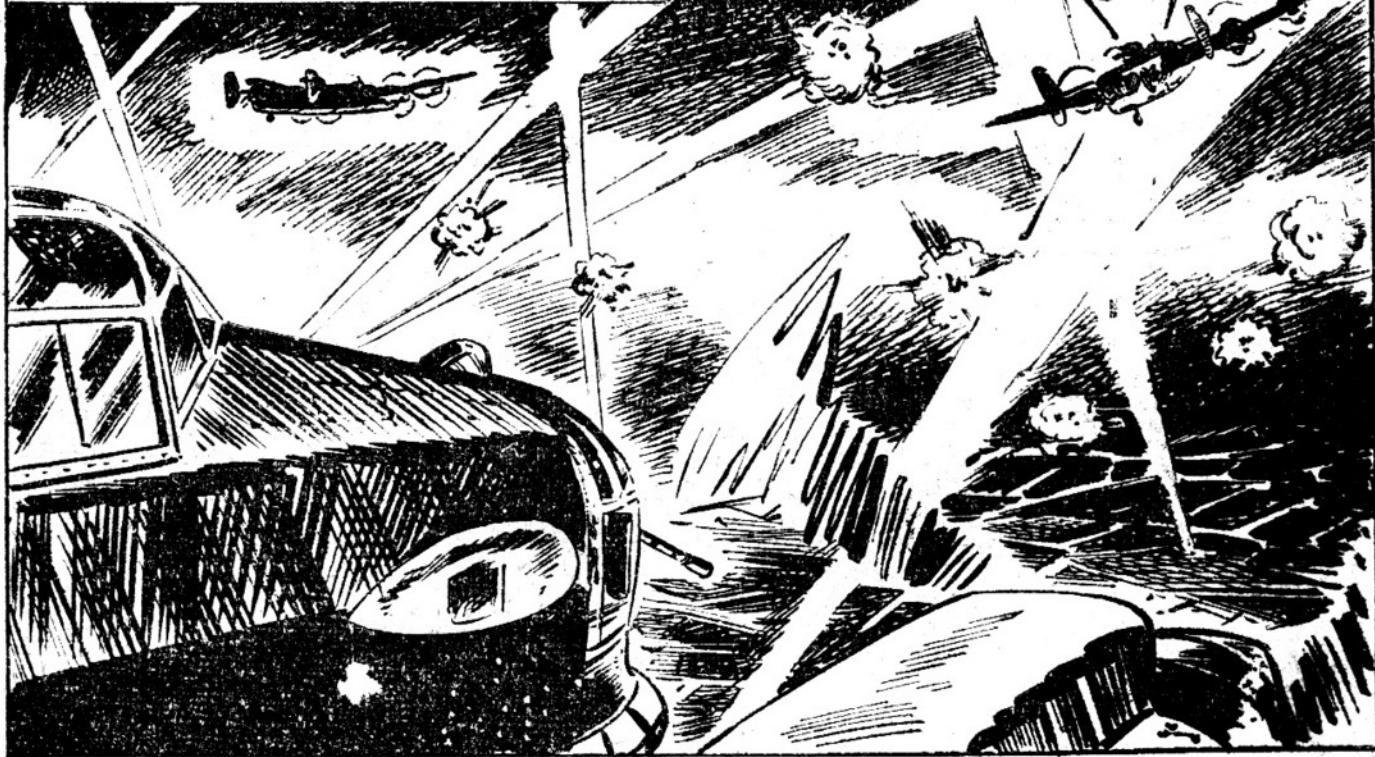
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THE MID-UPPER WAS VERY NEARLY RIGHT... THEY WERE WELL AND TRULY CONED! THE USUAL BARRAGE HAD STARTED A HUNDRED FEET BEHIND THEM AND WOULD WORK ITS WAY UP! THEY HAD THIRTY SECONDS TO GET OUT!

ENGINEER, STAND BY TO CUT THE PORT ENGINE!

STANDING BY!



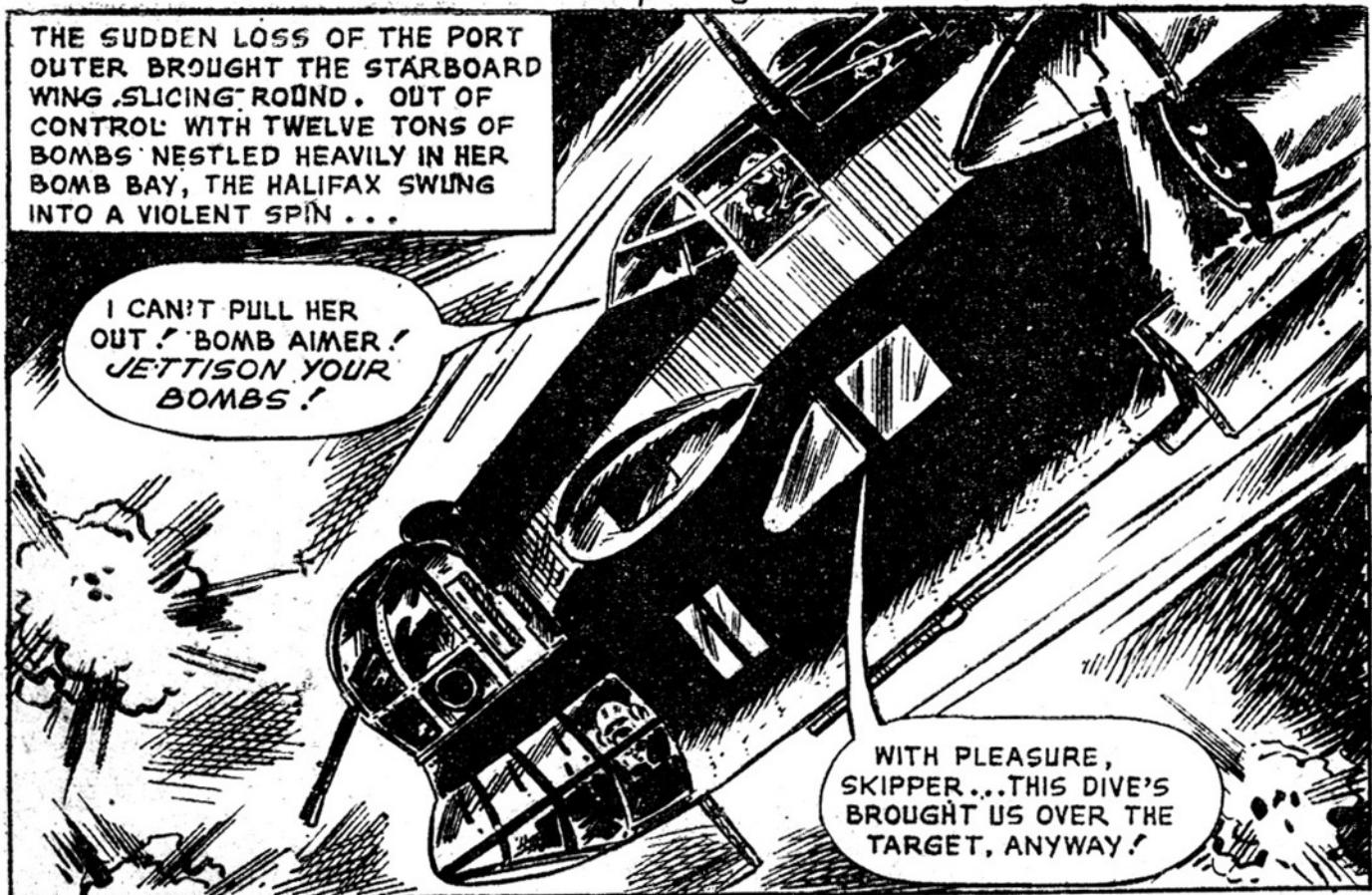
BY CUTTING THE PORT OUTER ENGINE, THE PILOT HOPED TO BE ABLE TO BRING THE HALIFAX ROUND IN A TIGHT DIVING TURN. BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

HECK! THEY'VE HIT THE PORT OUTER! PUT ON THE EXTINGUISHER SWITCH!

EXTINGUISHER SWITCH ON!



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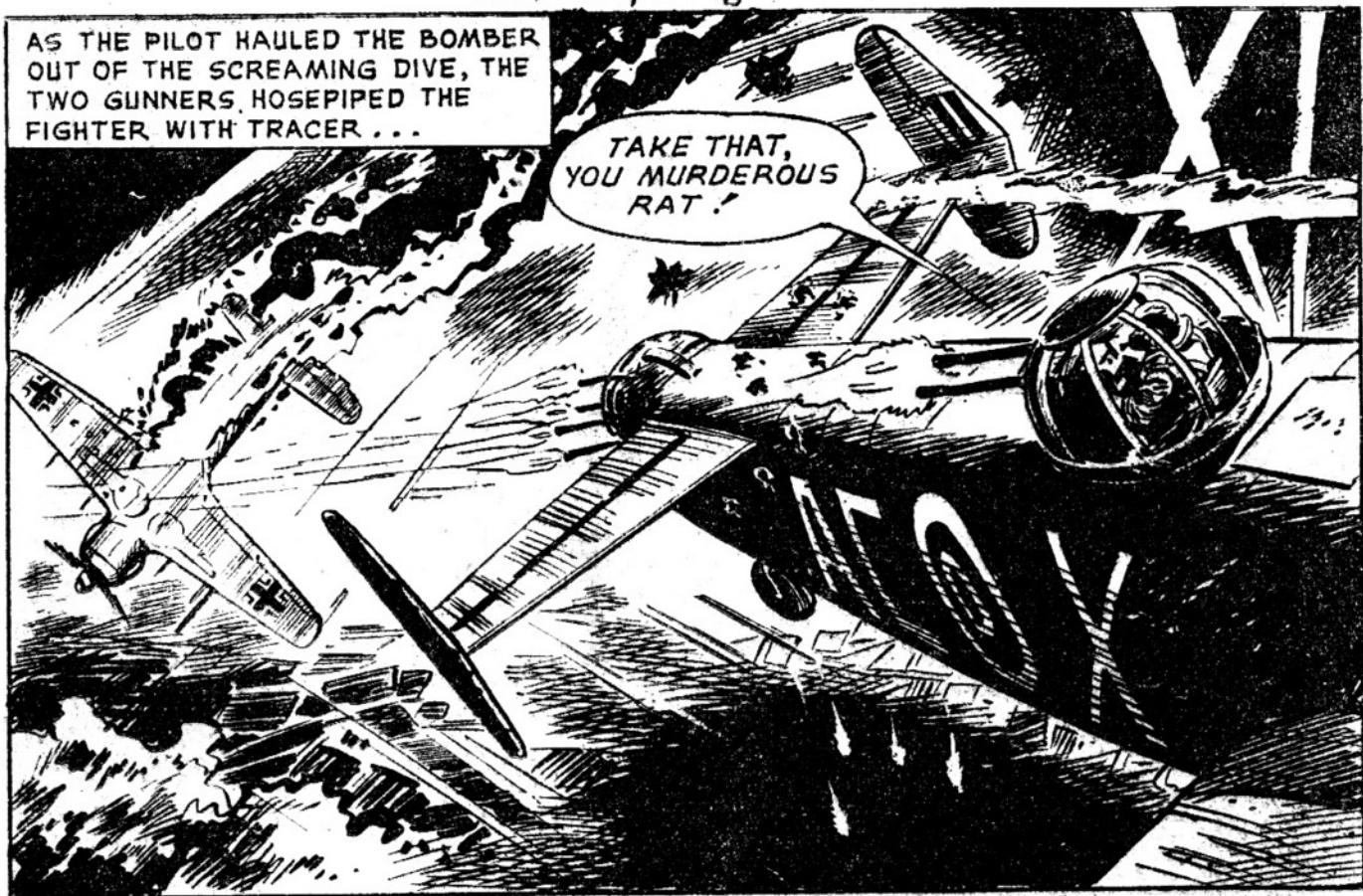


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AS THE PILOT HAULED THE BOMBER OUT OF THE SCREAMING DIVE, THE TWO GUNNERS HOSEPIPED THE FIGHTER WITH TRACER . . .

TAKE THAT,
YOU MURDEROUS
RAT!



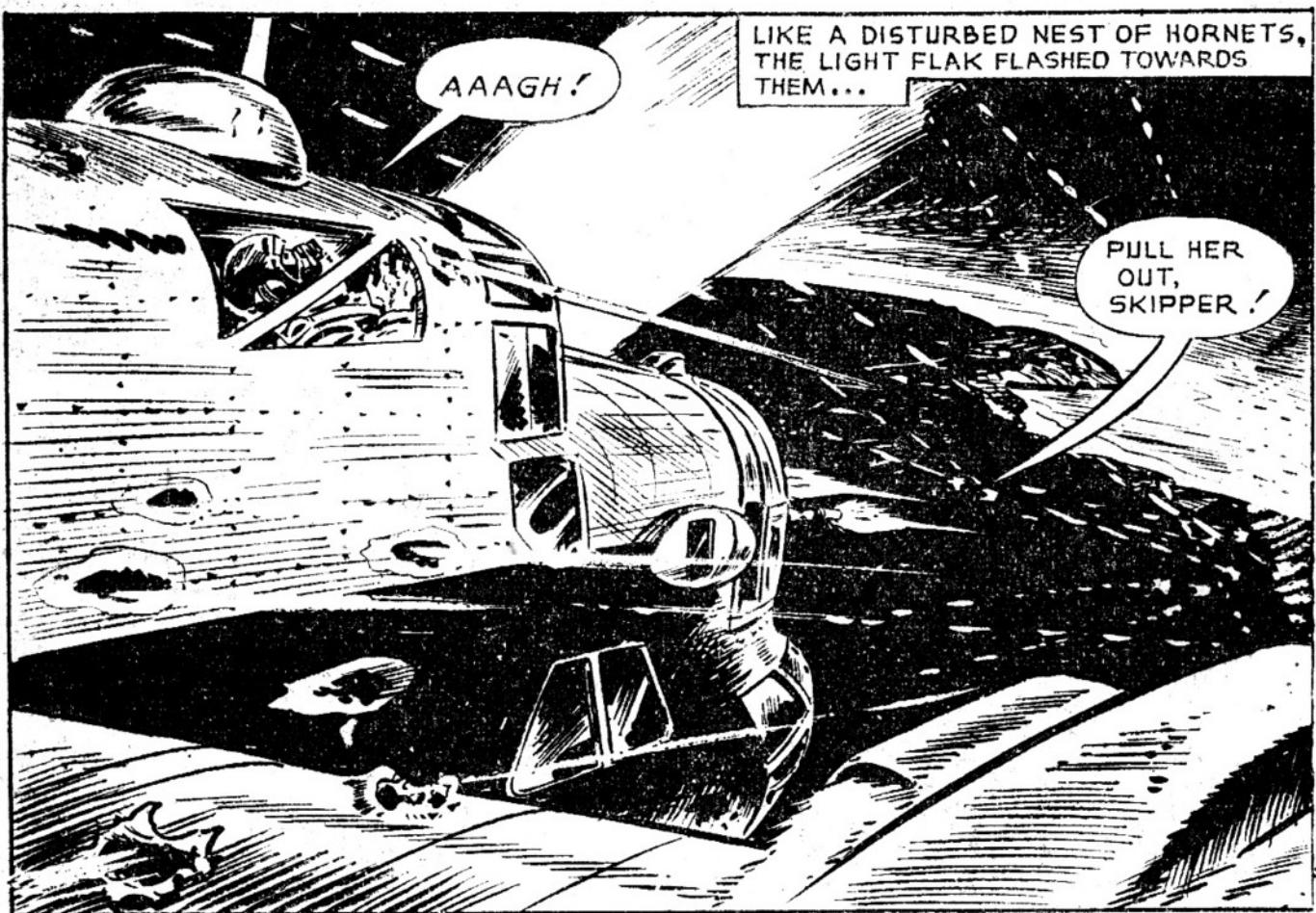
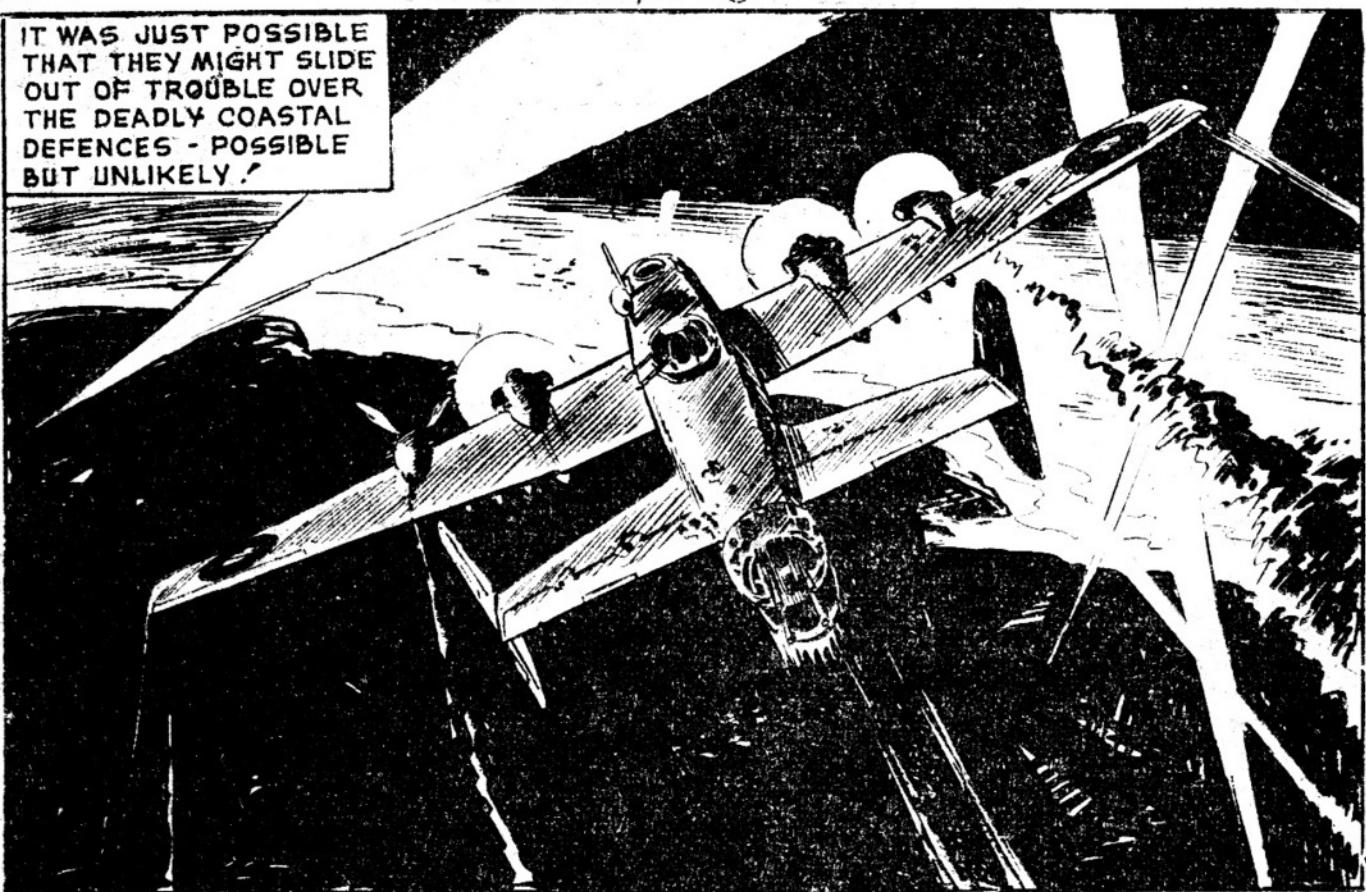
AS THEY CLIMBED AND TURNED AWAY FROM THE TARGET, THE FLAK FOUND THEM AGAIN.

THE FLAK BURSTS CLOSED IN...NEARER . . . NEARER . . .

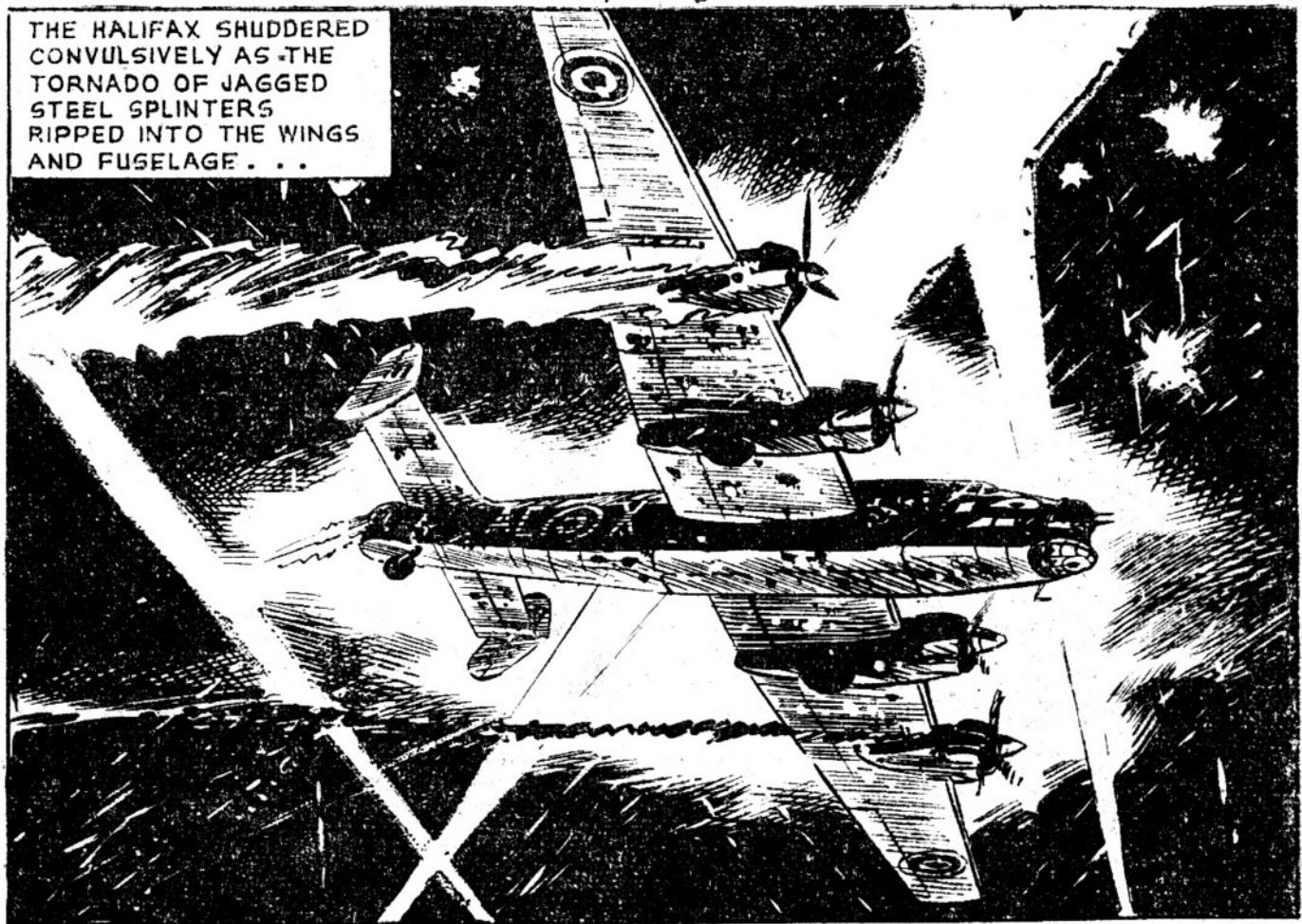
THE OLD BUS
WON'T STAND UP
TO THIS MUCH
LONGER!



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THE HALIFAX SHUDDERED CONVULSIVELY AS THE TORNADO OF JAGGED STEEL SPLINTERS RIPPED INTO THE WINGS AND FUSELAGE . . .



THE PILOT LOOKED AROUND HIM DAZEDLY AS HE RECEIVED NO ANSWER TO HIS CALLS ON THE INTERCOMM. THE LIGHT FLAK HAD RAKED THE LIMPING BOMBER FROM STEM TO STERN. ON TAKING STOCK OF THE SITUATION, THE PILOT FOUND THAT ONLY BOB WOULD ANSWER ON INTERCOMM . . .

HULLO, REAR GUNNER! CAN YOU HEAR ME? COME UP FRONT! CHECK ON THE OTHERS...



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BOB CLAMBERED OUT OF THE REAR TURRET AND AS HE PASSED ALONG THE SHOT-RIDDLED FUSELAGE, HE SAW THE MID-UPPER GUNNER SLUMPED LIFELESS OVER HIS GUNS. HE CROSSED THE MAIN SPAR . . .



ONLY HE AND THE PILOT WERE ALIVE!

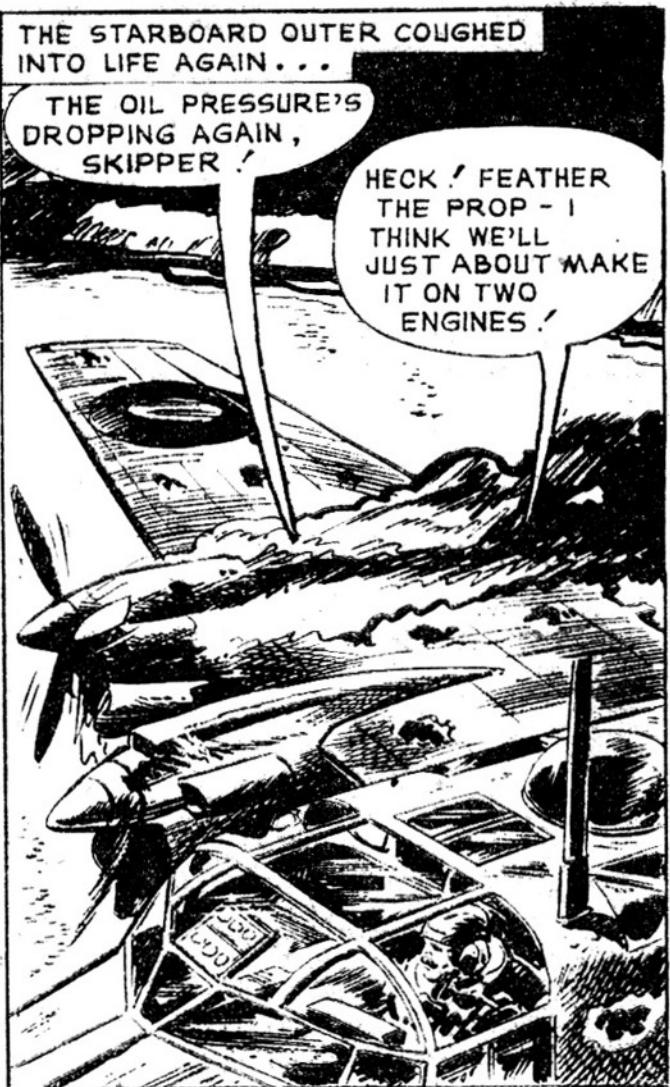
ALL RIGHT, SNAP OUT OF IT, DANVERS! WE'VE GOT TO GET HOME! WE'LL START UP THE STARBOARD OUTER AGAIN AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS! THE SWITCH IS THERE!



THE STARBOARD OUTER COUGHED INTO LIFE AGAIN . . .

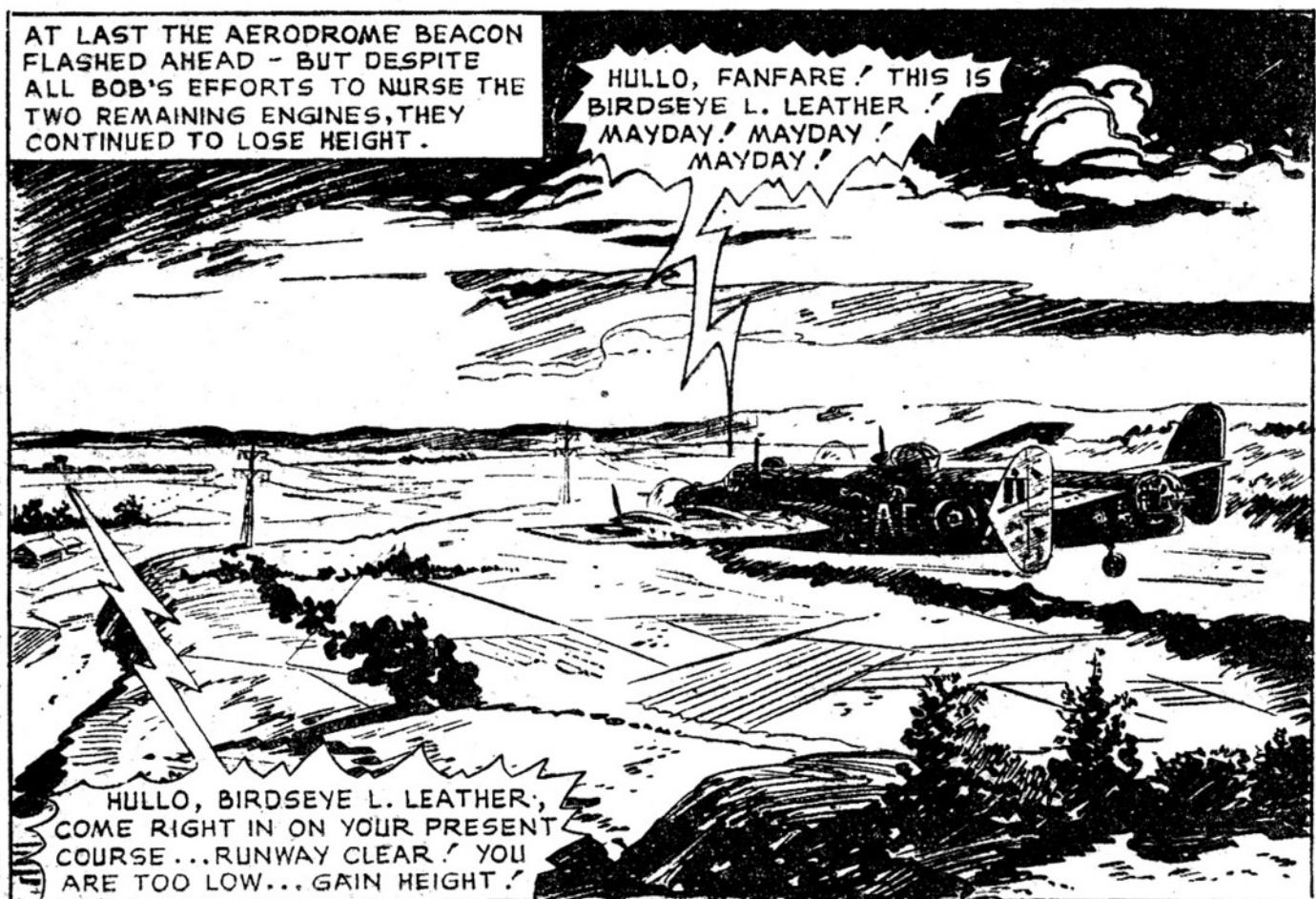
THE OIL PRESSURE'S DROPPING AGAIN, SKIPPER!

HECK! FEATHER THE PROP - I THINK WE'LL JUST ABOUT MAKE IT ON TWO ENGINES!

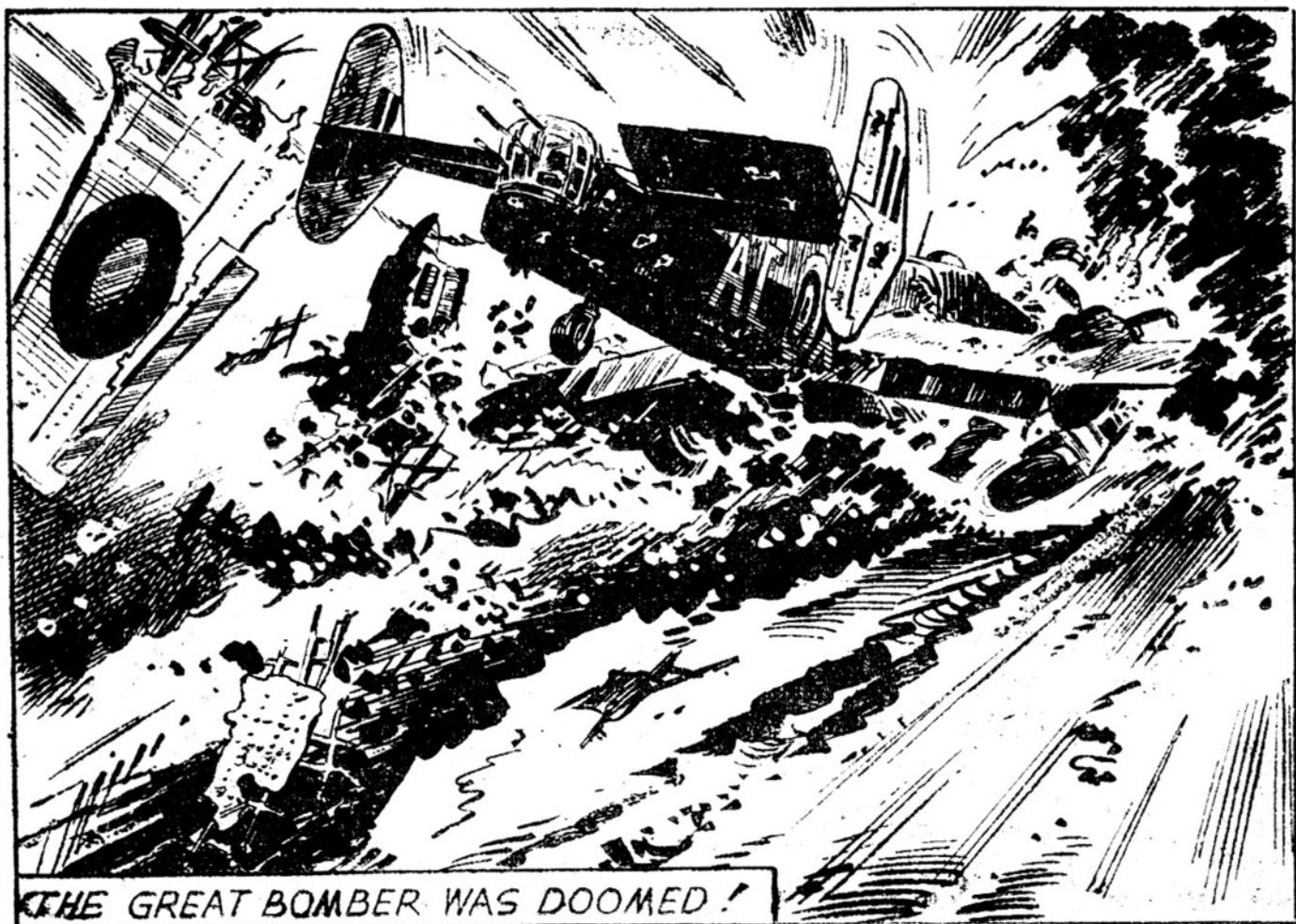


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Chapter 2. CAUTIOUS SQUADRON

THREE DAYS LATER, THE FUNERAL PARTY FIRED THEIR VOLLEY OVER THE GRAVES OF THE CREW OF L. LEATHER. MEANWHILE, ON THE AIRFIELD, THE HALIFAXES WERE AGAIN BEING ARMED FOR WAR . . .

SO IT GOES ON! TONIGHT SOME OTHER POOR BLIGHTERS WILL TAKE OFF AND COP THAT FLAK! IT'S MURDER, THAT'S WHAT IT IS...MURDER!



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE, COMMANDING OFFICER OF 950 FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRON, WAS AN ANGRY MAN...

THESE FELLERS, DANVERS AND ROBERTSON, ARE TWO DAYS OVERDUE IN REPORTING FOR DUTY! ANY NEWS OF THEM?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, SIR, A SIGNAL HAS JUST COME IN. IT SEEMS THAT -



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WAS SOMEWHAT SOOTHED BY HIS ADJUTANT'S EXPLANATION...



ALL THE SQUADRON'S OPERATIONS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT TO THE LETTER FOR FAIRBORNE ENFORCED A RIGID DISCIPLINE AMONG THE CREWS, BOTH IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND—INDIVIDUALISTS WERE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.



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THE WHEELS OF THE ONCOMING CAR LOCKED; BUT IT SKIDDED FORWARD ON THE LOOSE GRAVEL OF THE ROADWAY...

LOOK OUT,
BOB!



BOB HAD DRIVEN TO THE SQUADRON IN A DREAM. HIS MIND WAS STILL A KALEIDOSCOPE OF FLASHING SEARCHLIGHTS, FLAK-BURSTS, AND VIVID PICTURES OF HIS DYING BROTHER. HE HAD BRAKED INSTINCTIVELY AS THE DOG FLASHED ACROSS THE ROAD BEFORE HIM — BUT IT HAD BEEN TOO LATE.

YOU LUNATIC! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE? YOU'VE KILLED MY DOG!

I'M SORRY,
SIR!

SORRY, ARE YOU...
(I'LL MAKE YOU SORRY!)



IT WAS NOT UNTIL THAT AFTERNOON THAT THE ADJUTANT JUDGED IT SAFE TO INTRODUCE THE NEW CREW FORMALLY TO THEIR C.O...

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DID TO HIS DOG, ANGUS! BUT, HANG IT! I'VE GOT A FEW THINGS ON MY MIND!

WELL, WAIT A DAY OR TWO, LADDIE, BEFORE YOU START LETTING THEM OUT!

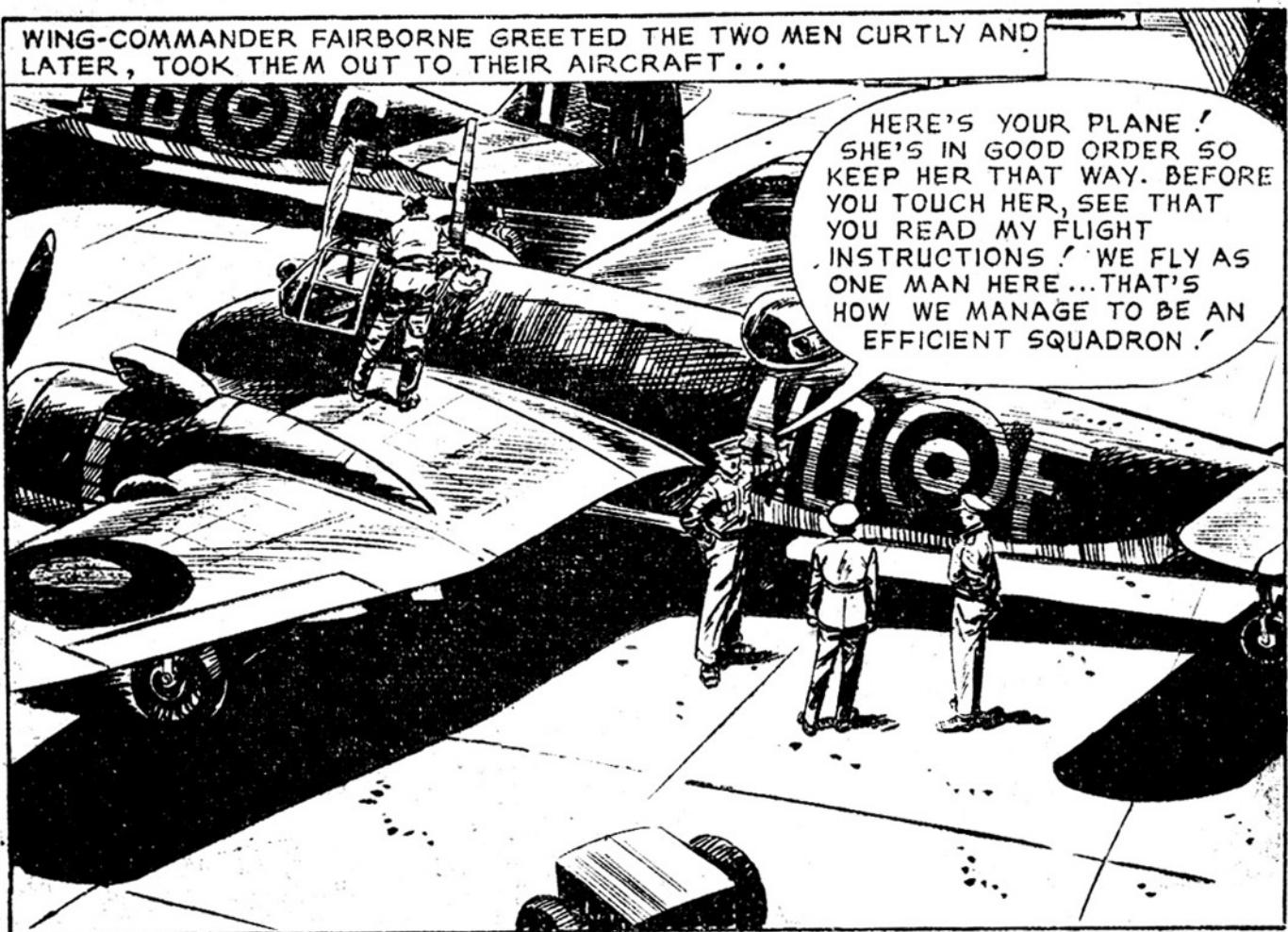
DANVERS AND ROBERTSON TO REPORT, SIR!

HM! I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO OVERLOOK IT... BUT HE'LL HAVE TO BEHAVE, BY THUNDER!



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE GREETED THE TWO MEN CURTLY AND LATER, TOOK THEM OUT TO THEIR AIRCRAFT ...

HERE'S YOUR PLANE! SHE'S IN GOOD ORDER SO KEEP HER THAT WAY. BEFORE YOU TOUCH HER, SEE THAT YOU READ MY FLIGHT INSTRUCTIONS! WE FLY AS ONE MAN HERE...THAT'S HOW WE MANAGE TO BE AN EFFICIENT SQUADRON!



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FAIRBORNE HAD EXPLAINED THAT THE SQUADRON WAS MOSTLY ENGAGED IN LOW LEVEL SWEEPS OVER ENEMY-OCCUPIED HOLLAND, BELGIUM AND FRANCE.

I REALISE THAT YOU, DANVERS, HAVE HAD A SHAKY DO RECENTLY...BUT I DEMAND STEADY AND ACCURATE FORMATION FLYING FROM MY PILOTS!



FAIRBORNE REDDENED WITH SUDDEN ANGER . . .

NO, BY THUNDER, THERE WILL NOT! IN FACT...GET THIS STRAIGHT, DANVERS...IF YOU GO CHASING GLORY AND GONGS SHOOTING UP FLAK BATTERIES, I'LL COURT-MARTIAL YOU...IF YOU LIVE TO TELL THE TALE!



BOB AND ANGUS DRIFTED BACK TO THE MESS IN THE WAKE OF THEIR C.O....

NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS, ANGUS, I'M TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SHOOT UP FLAK, SEARCHLIGHTS, AND NIGHT FIGHTER STATIONS! THE C.O. CAN GO AND WHISTLE!

FOR PETE'S SAKE, KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.



BOB AND ANGUS HAD BARELY BEGUN TO GET USED TO THE WAYS OF AN OPERATIONAL SQUADRON WHEN THE BRIEFING FOR THE BIG SHOW TOOK PLACE.

EVERY BEAUFIGHTER WILL BE FLYING ON THIS SWEEP AND WE'RE GOING TO SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND ! BUT WE WILL, HOWEVER, KEEP CLEAR OF HORNETS' NESTS ! DANVERS, YOU WILL FLY AS MY NUMBER TWO ! I TRUST BY NOW YOU HAVE READ MY FLIGHT INSTRUCTIONS ?

YESSIR !

THE SQUADRON FLEW INTO THE DAWN IN RIGID FORMATION . BOB HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING HIS PLACE BEHIND HIS IRASCIBLE C.O...

HULLO, BLUE SHARKS ! ENEMY COAST AHEAD. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN... AND REMEMBER, KEEP TOGETHER !

WE'LL NEVER DO MUCH IF WE KEEP IN FORMATION ALL THE TIME.
HE OUGHT TO LET US HUNT ON OUR OWN !

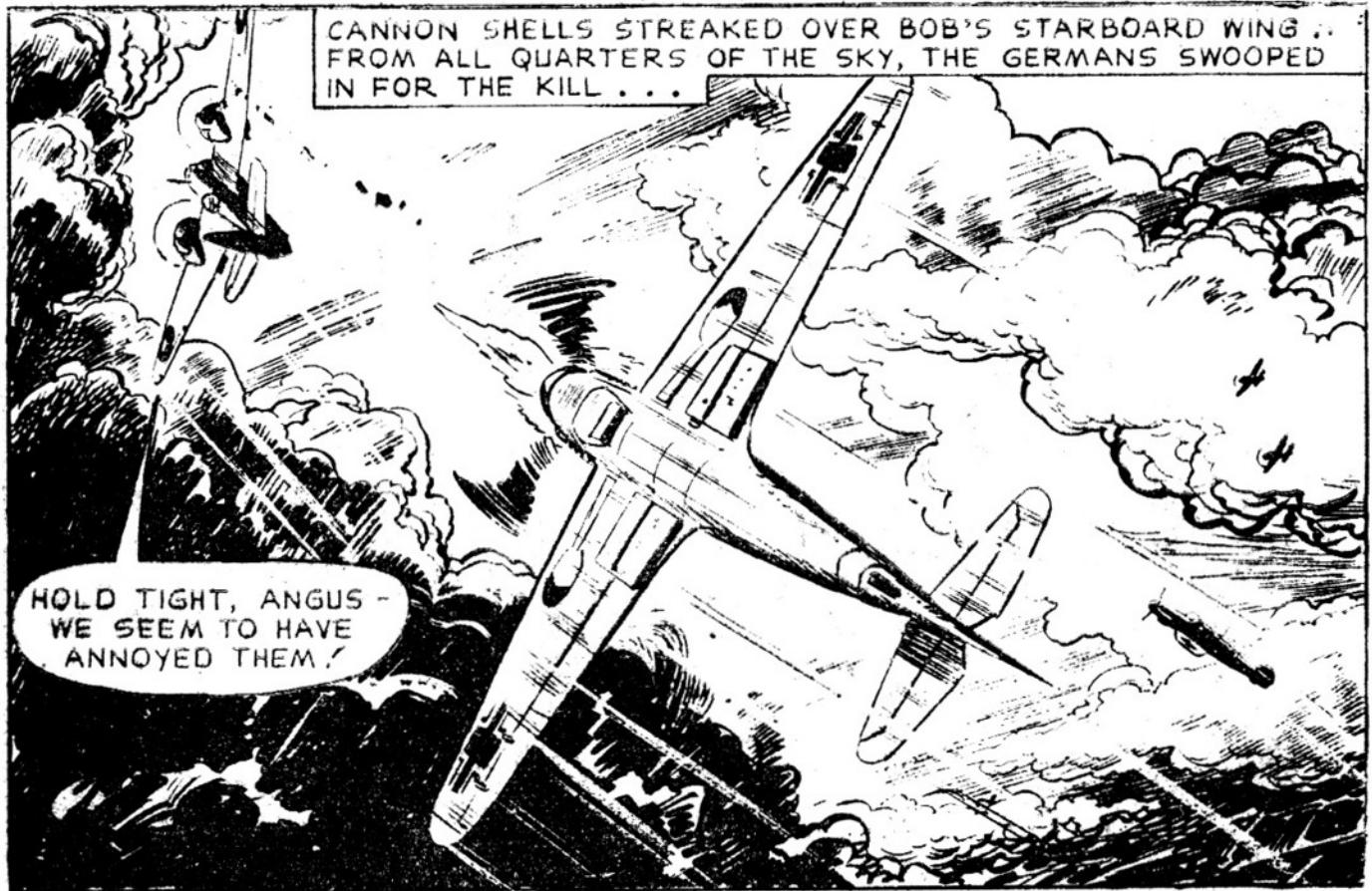
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THE MESSERSCHMITTS NEARLY CAUGHT THE BEAUFIGHTERS UNAWARES - BUT WING COMMANDER FAIRBORNE ISSUED SWIFT ORDERS FOR EVASIVE ACTION...



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THE BEAUFIGHTER SCREAMED DOWN IN A POWER DIVE AND THEY DODGED AT HEDGETOP HEIGHT TOWARDS HOME. THEN, A MILE FROM THE COAST . . .



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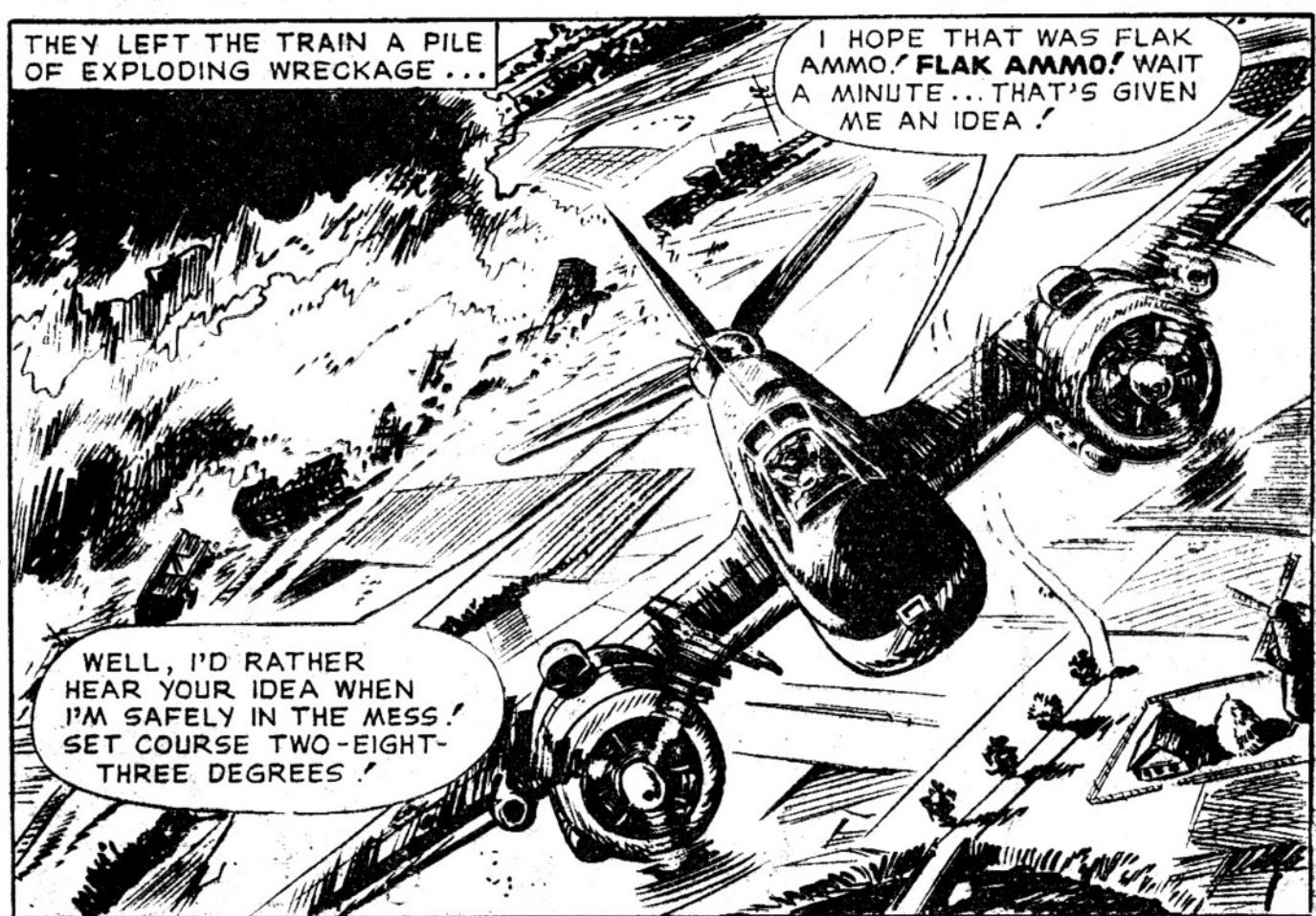
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BOB INSTANTLY SWUNG THE NOSE ROUND, STEADIED THE PLANE AND THUMBED THE CANNON INTO BLAZING LIFE . . .



THEY LEFT THE TRAIN A PILE OF EXPLODING WRECKAGE . . .

I HOPE THAT WAS FLAK AMMO! **FLAK AMMO!** WAIT A MINUTE . . . THAT'S GIVEN ME AN IDEA!

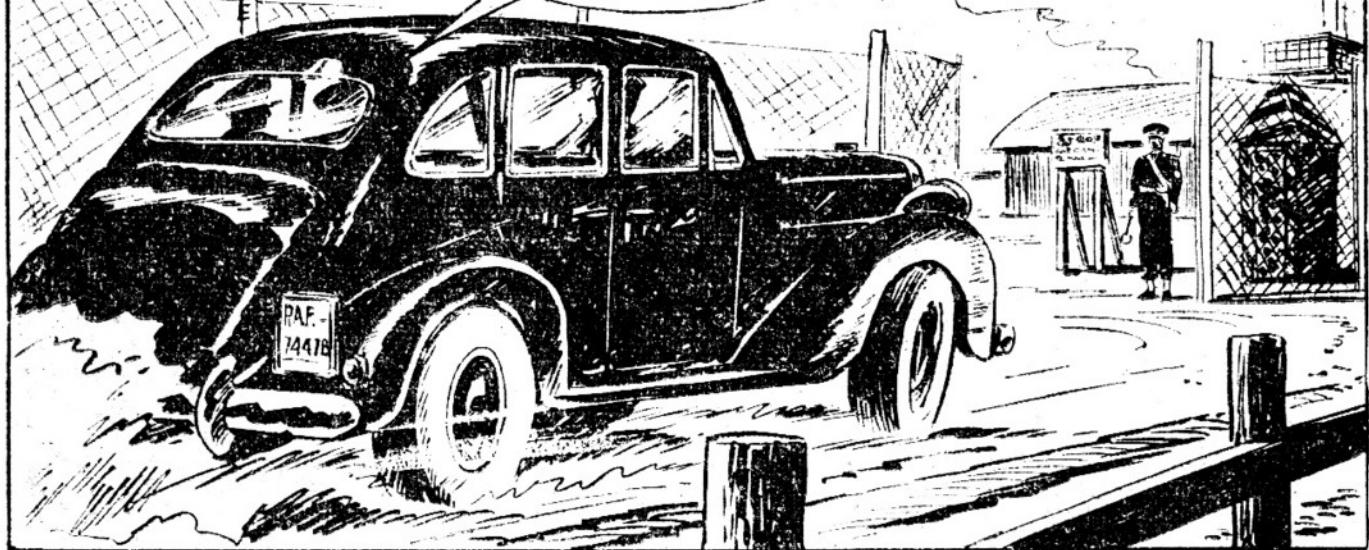


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WHILE THE SQUADRON'S SWEEP WAS IN PROGRESS, A STAFF CAR WAS CARRYING A SENIOR R.A.F. OFFICER AND HIS AIDE-DE-CAMP TO THE STATION ...

IT'S RATHER DIFFICULT, REALLY, AS FAIRBORNE SEEMS A GOOD C.O.! THE FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SQUADRON HAVE DONE NOTHING WORTHWHILE FOR NINE MONTHS!

...AND WE'RE TO GINGER THEM UP A BIT!



AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL WAS IN TIME TO SEE FAIRBORNE LEAD HIS SQUADRON IN TO LAND ...

ARE THEY ALL THERE, SQUADRON LEADER?

THERE'S ONE MISSING, SIR! I WONDER IF IT'S THE NEW PILOT?



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WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WAS THOROUGHLY ANNOYED. THE MESSENGER'S NEWS THAT BRASS-HATS HAD ARRIVED DID NOTHING TO SWEETEN HIS TEMPER . . .

WHAT THE DEUCE DO THEY WANT SNOOPING AROUND HERE? ANYWAY, BRASS-HATS OR NO BRASS-HATS, SEE THAT DANVERS IS SENT TO ME AS SOON AS HE LANDS . . . IF HE LANDS !

YESSIR !



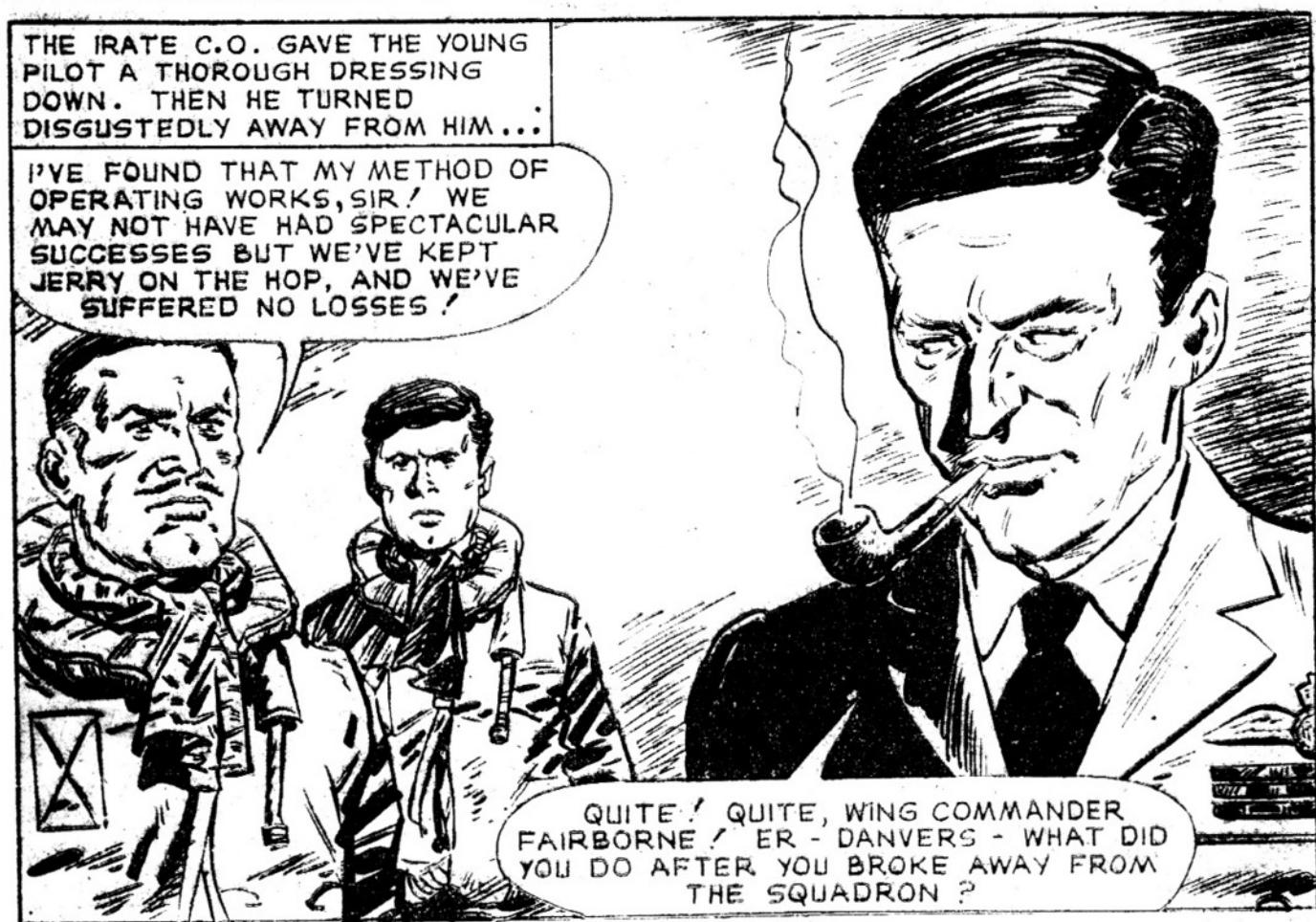
ALL THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL'S TACT COULD NOT CONCEAL THE REAL REASON FOR THE VISIT...

I SEE, GENTLEMEN ! IN SHORT, YOU THINK THAT I'M A COWARD AND THAT THE WHOLE SQUADRON'S A USELESS BUNCH OF...

COME, COME, FAIRBORNE - ALL WE'RE SAYING IS THAT THE SQUADRON HASN'T HAD ANY WILD SUCCESSES LATELY !



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PERHAPS THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL HAD NOTED THE EXCITED GLEAM IN THE PILOT'S EYE. WHILE FAIRBORNE FROWNED, BOB REPORTED HIS SUCCESS, AND WENT ON TO ADVANCE HIS IDEA FOR FURTHER ATTACKS.

WELL, SIR ! IF WE COULD HAVE THE ROUTE AND TIME TABLES OF AMMO TRAINS...ESPECIALLY IN THE RUHR REGION—WE COULD INTERCEPT AND ATTACK THEM ! IT MIGHT MESS UP THE FLAK DEFENCES AND GIVE THE BOMBER BOYS A CHANCE !

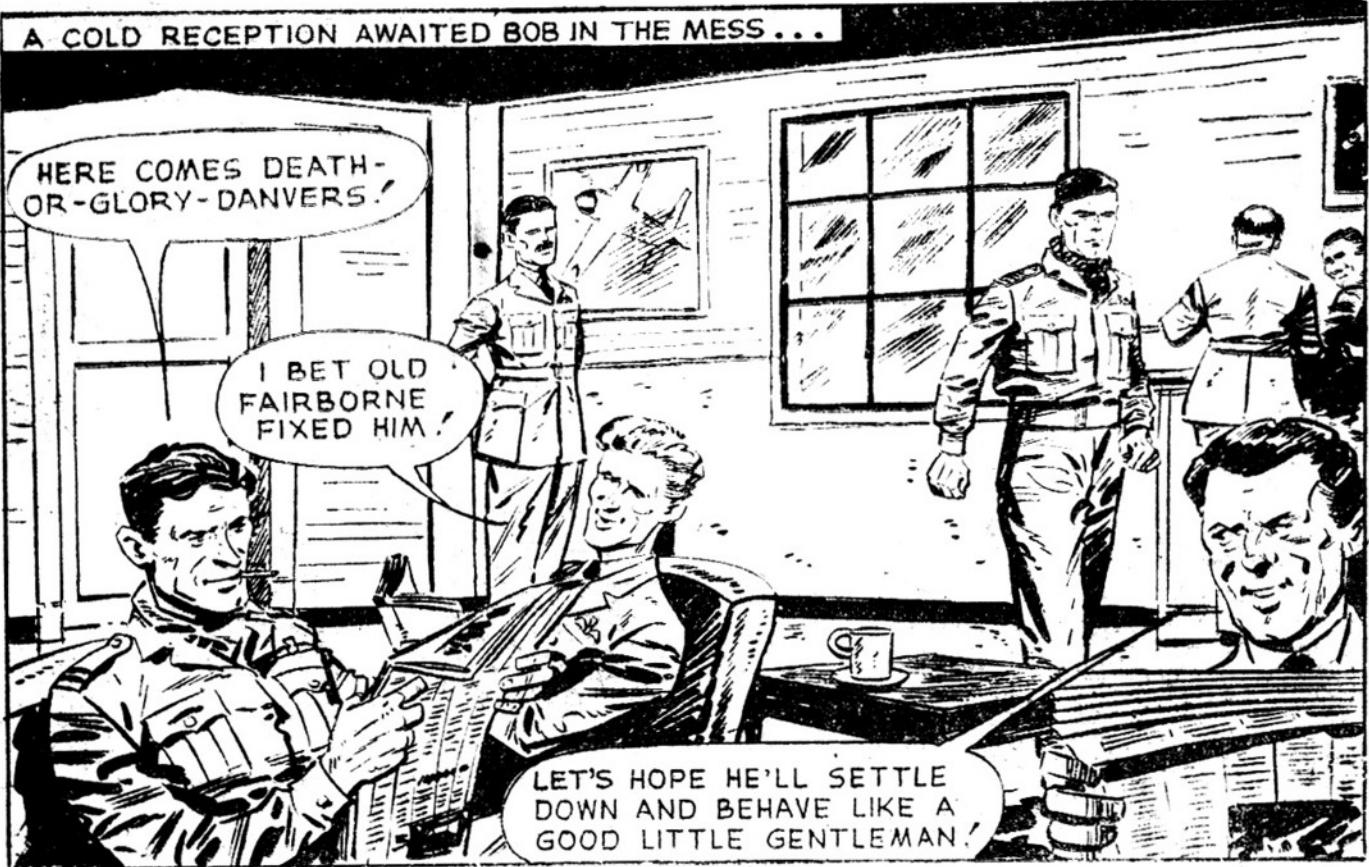


WHEN DANVERS HAD BEEN DISMISSED...

NOW, LOOK HERE, FAIRBORNE ! THAT LAD'S IDEA MAY BE A WINNER OR IT MAY BE A DUD, BUT WE'LL GIVE IT A GO !



A COLD RECEPTION AWAITED BOB IN THE MESS ...



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Chapter 3. MISSING TARGET

THE BEAUFIGHTER CROSSED THE NORTH SEA AT WAVE TOP HEIGHT . . .

AT LAST I FEEL AS IF I WAS REALLY DOING SOMETHING USEFUL !

WELL, LET'S HOPE YOU'LL BE SATISFIED. I'M NOT SO KEEN ON CHASING AMMUNITION TRAINS FOR THE REST OF THE WAR . . . THERE'S NO FUTURE IN IT !

THEY CERTAINLY TOOK THE ENEMY COASTAL DEFENCES BY SURPRISE . . .

EIN ENGLANDER !

HIMMEL !

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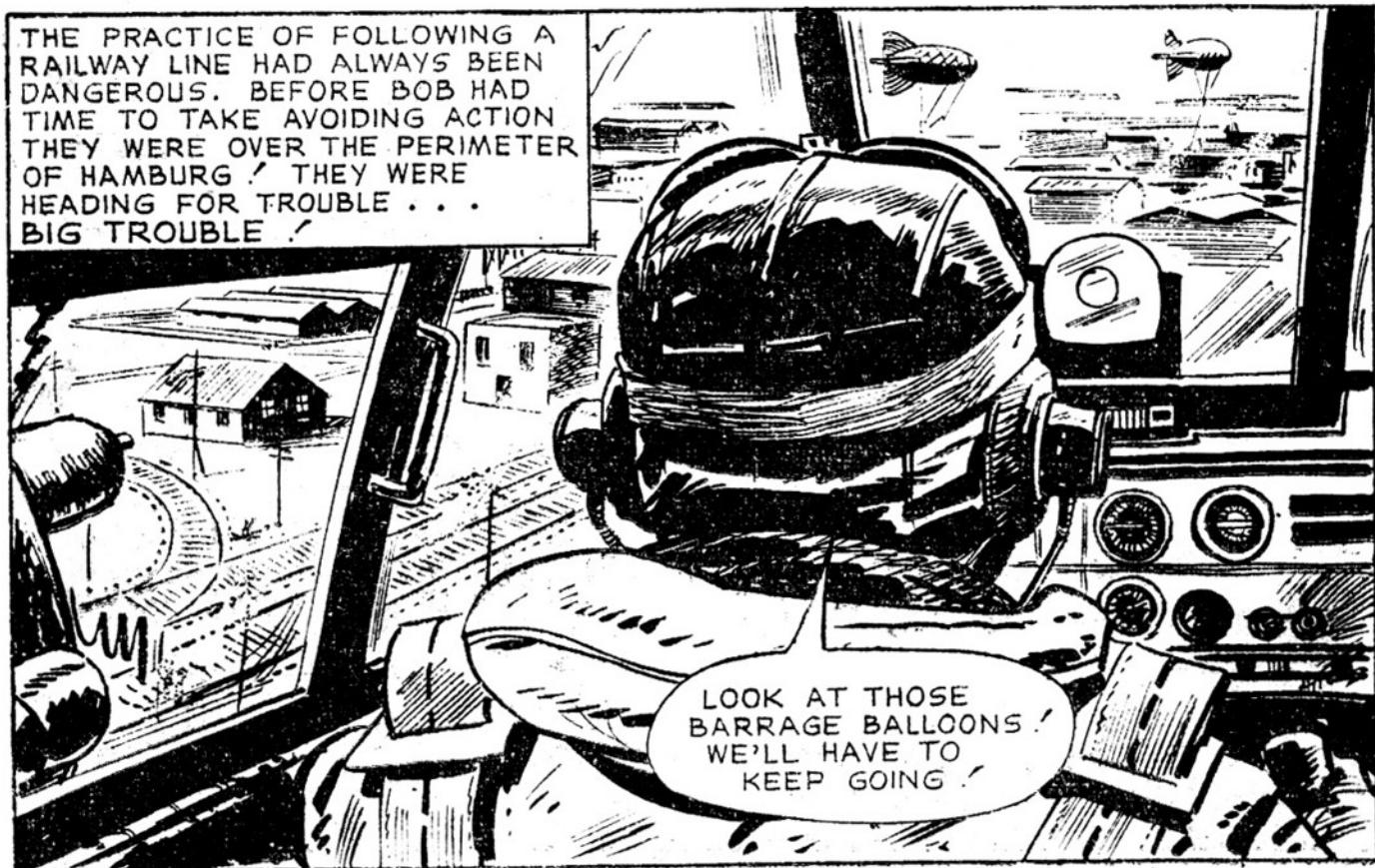
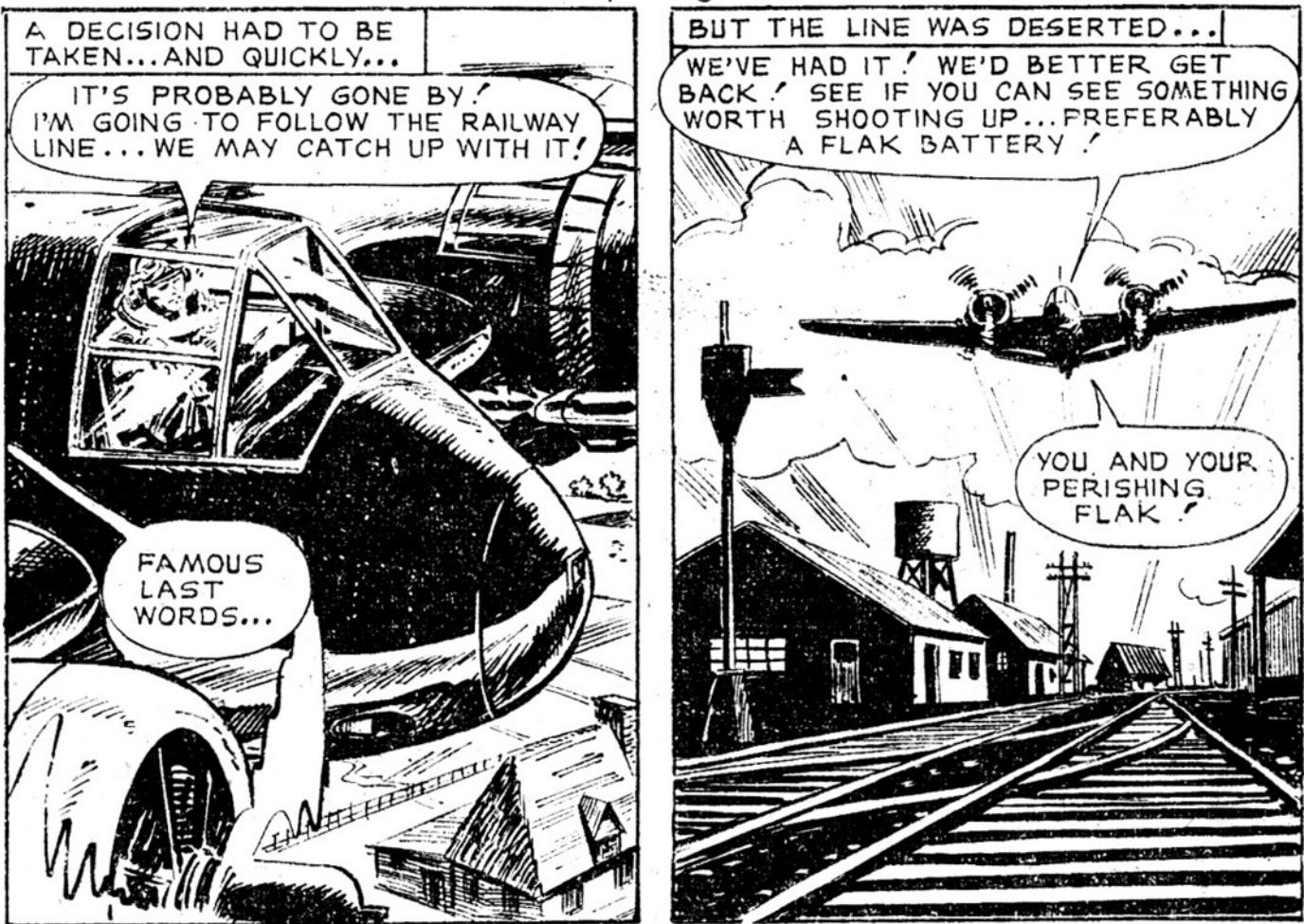
BUT THERE WAS ONE GERMAN, A RAILWAY SIGNALMAN, WHO WAS WIDE AWAKE AND WITH WIT ENOUGH TO THINK OF A LIKELY TARGET FOR THE ENGLISH PLANE.



ANGUS' NAVIGATION BROUGHT THE BEAUFIGHTER OVER THE INTERCEPTION POINT DEAD ON TIME...

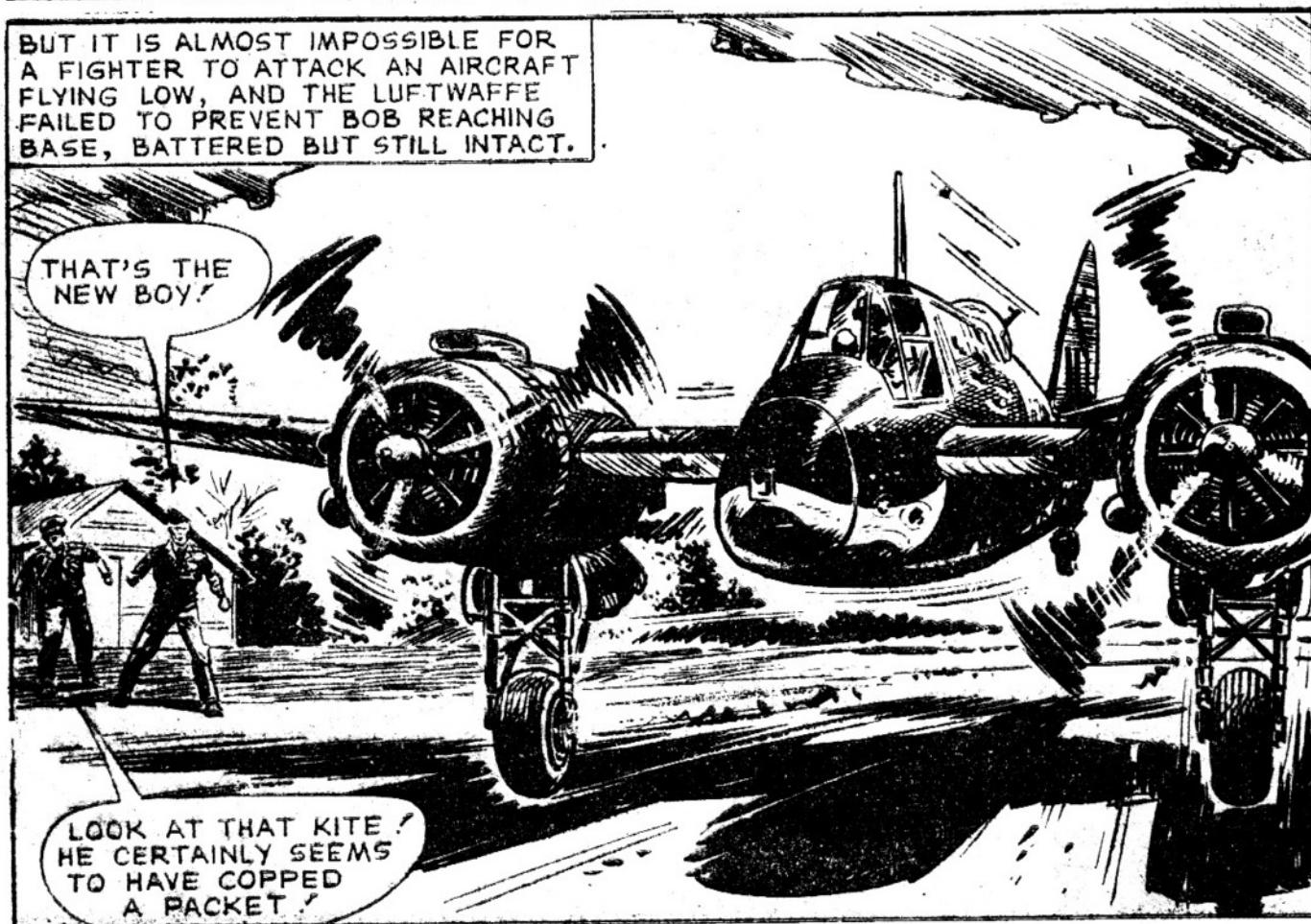


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THREE TRAINS WERE SCHEDULED TO LEAVE OSNABRUCK FOR THE HAMBURG AREA AT HALF-HOURLY INTERVALS...

HAMBURG

SCHWERIN

ELBE

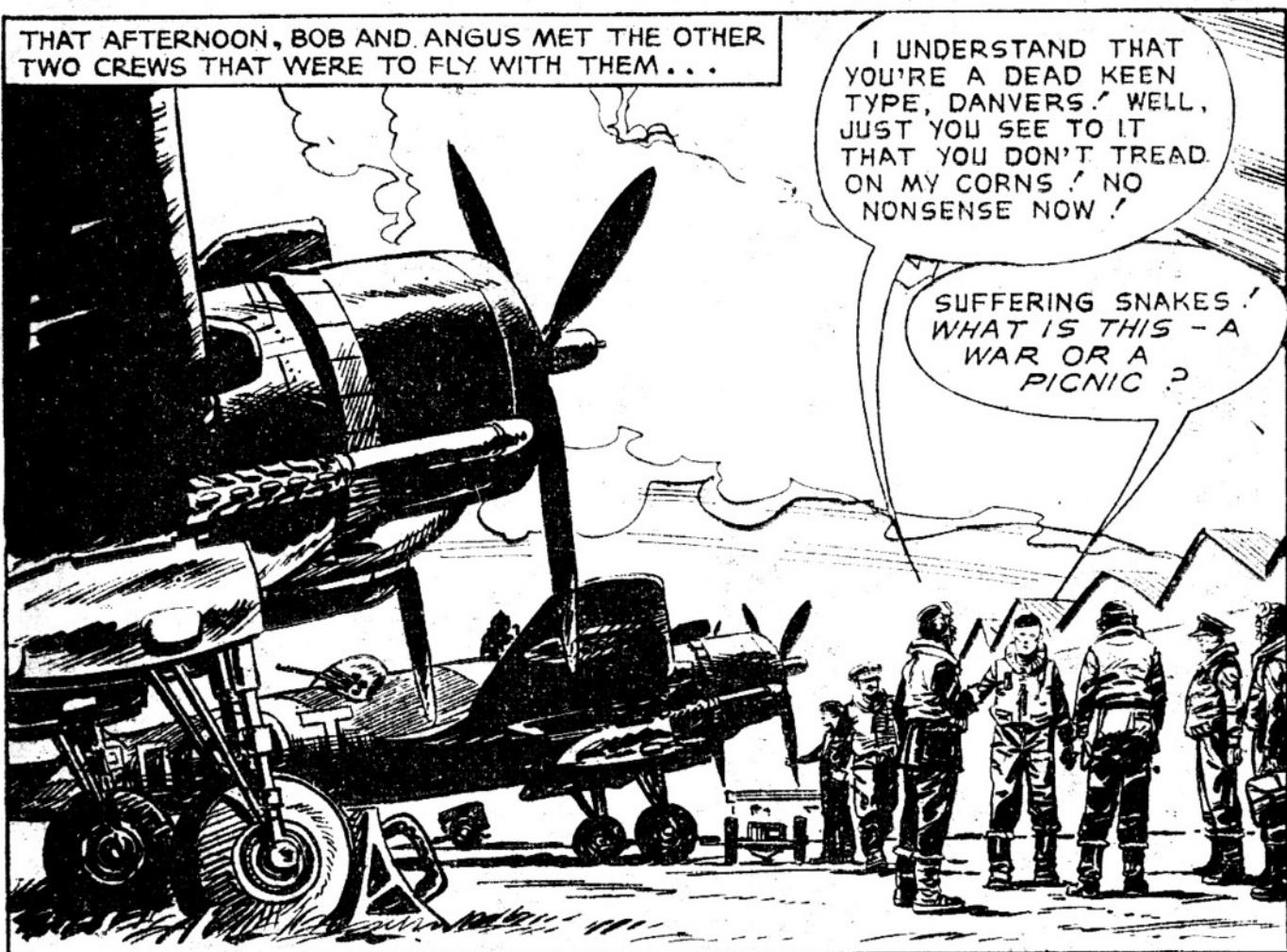
TO BERLIN

...THE IDEA IS TO INTERCEPT THESE TRAINS AT THEIR THREE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS ! THREE FLIGHTS OF THREE AIRCRAFT WILL THEREFORE TAKE PART ... ONE FOR EACH TRAIN. HERE IS THE ORDER OF BATTLE ...

THAT AFTERNOON, BOB AND ANGUS MET THE OTHER TWO CREWS THAT WERE TO FLY WITH THEM ...

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE A DEAD KEEN TYPE, DANVERS ! WELL, JUST YOU SEE TO IT THAT YOU DON'T TREAD ON MY CORNS ! NO NONSENSE NOW !

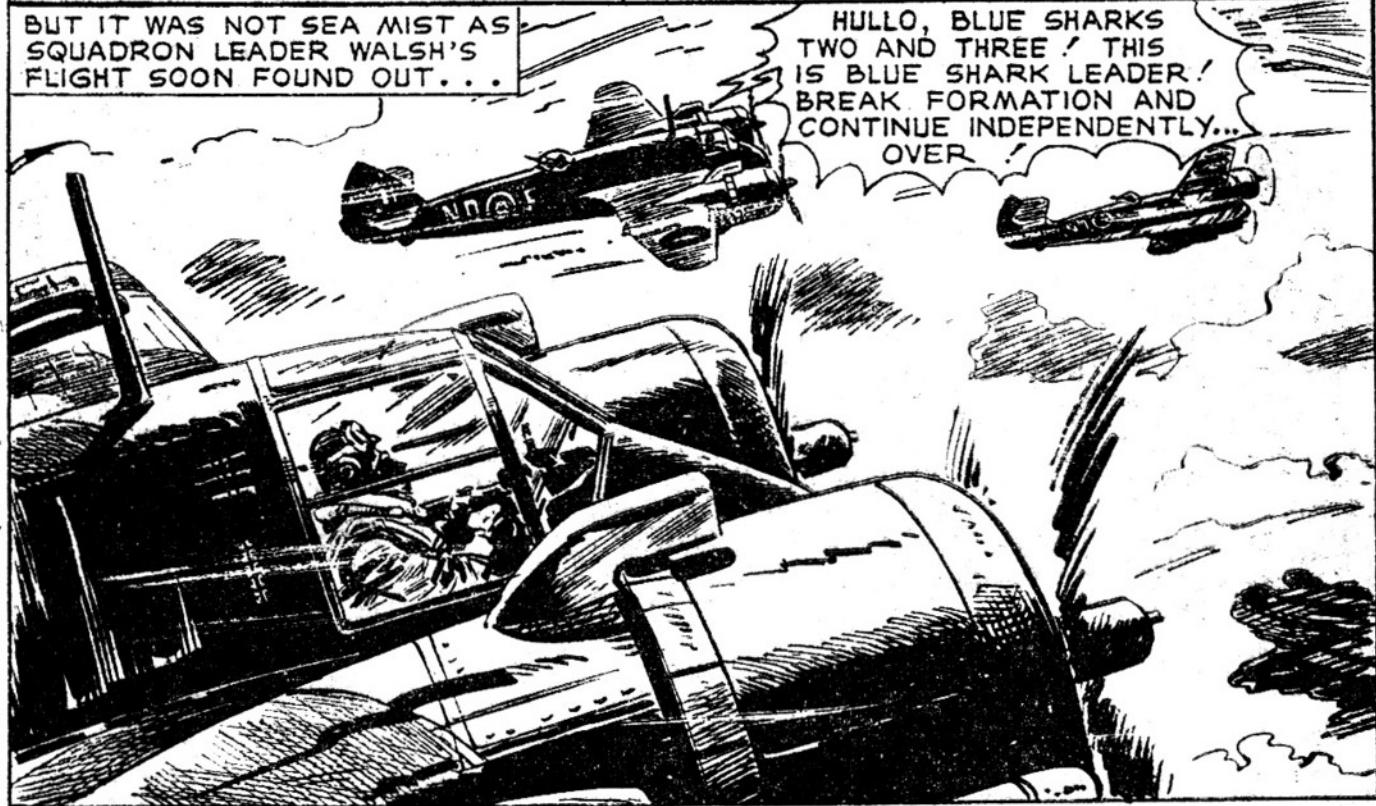
SUFFERING SNAKES ! WHAT IS THIS - A WAR OR A PICNIC ?



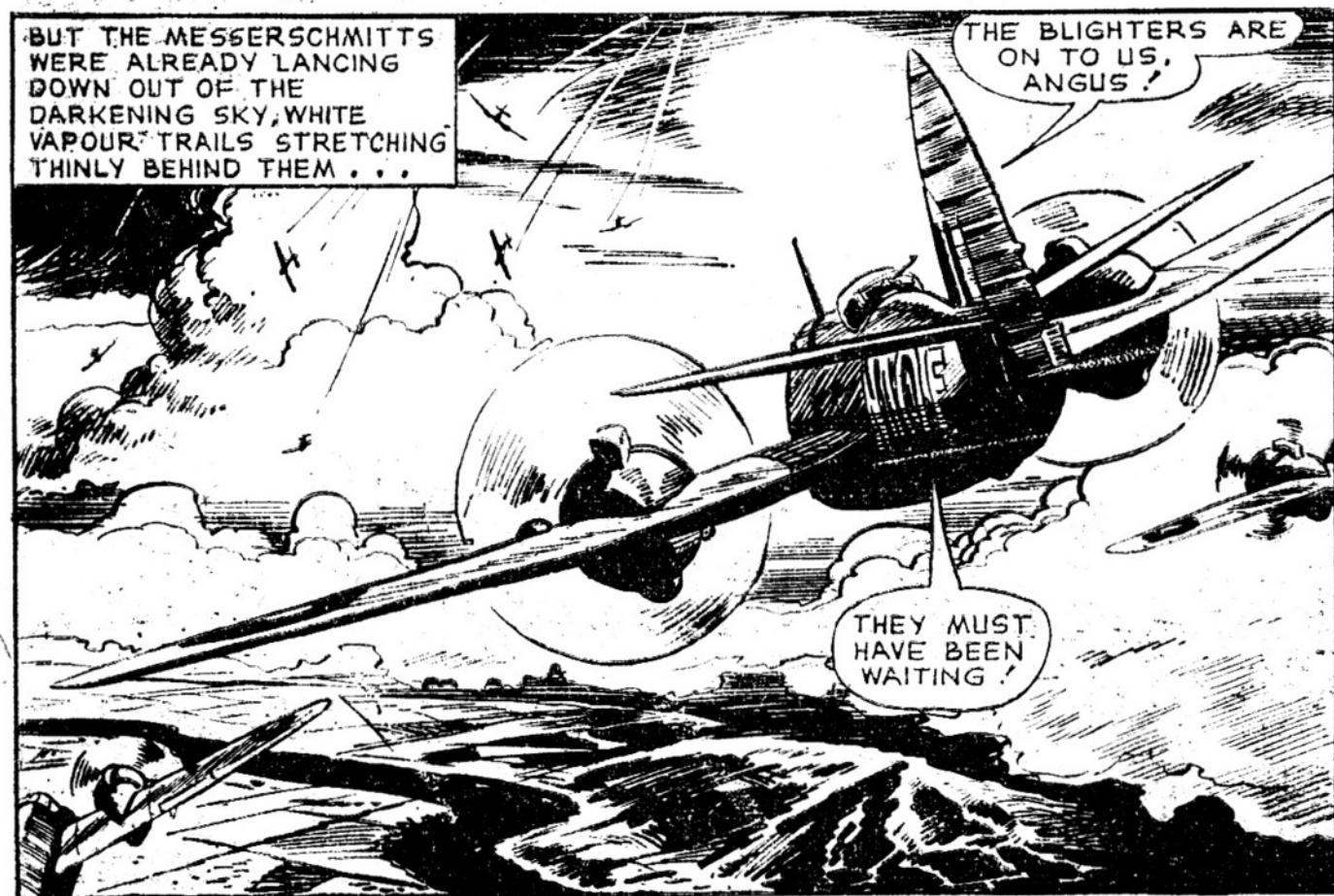
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Chapter 4. NIGHT INTRUDERS

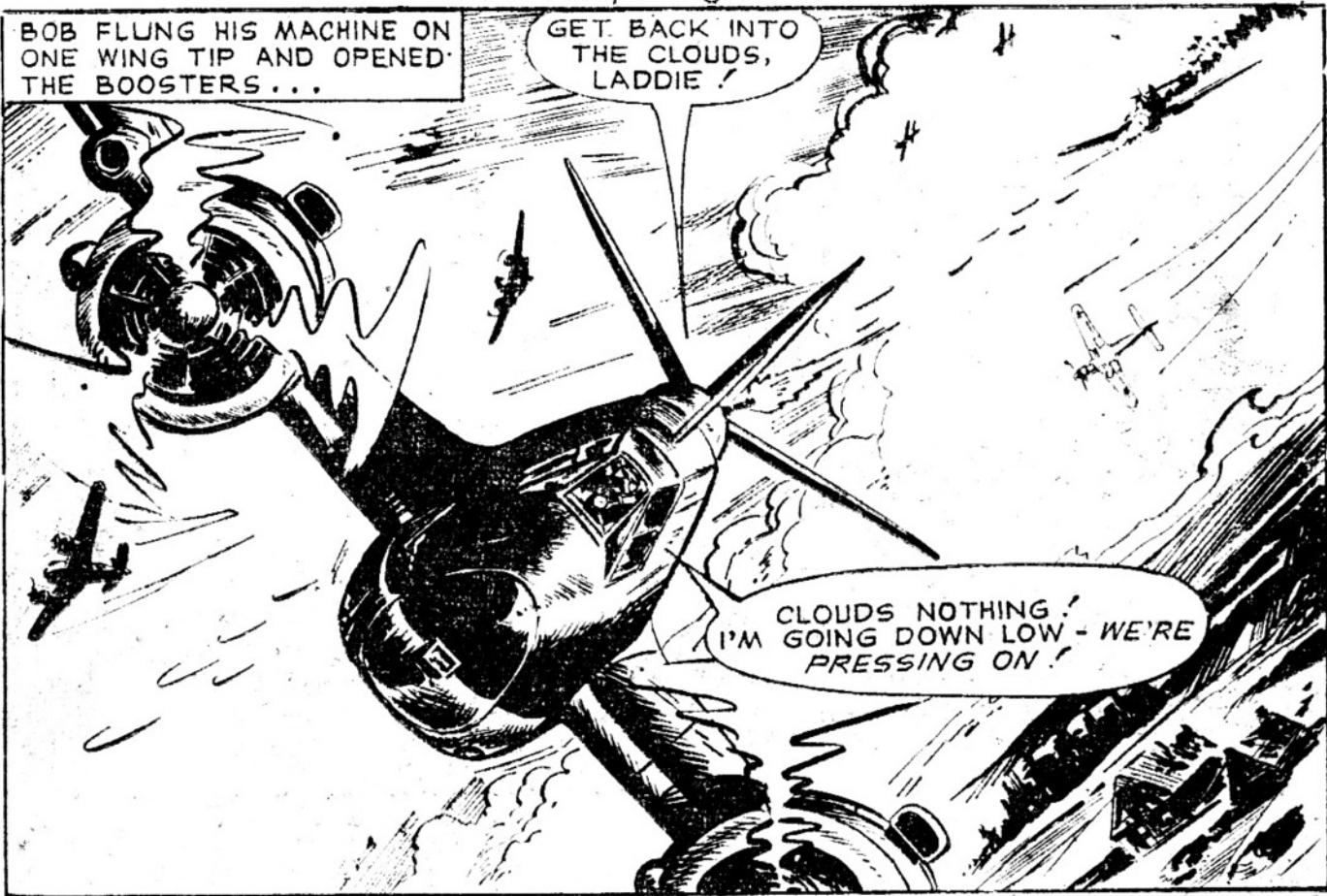


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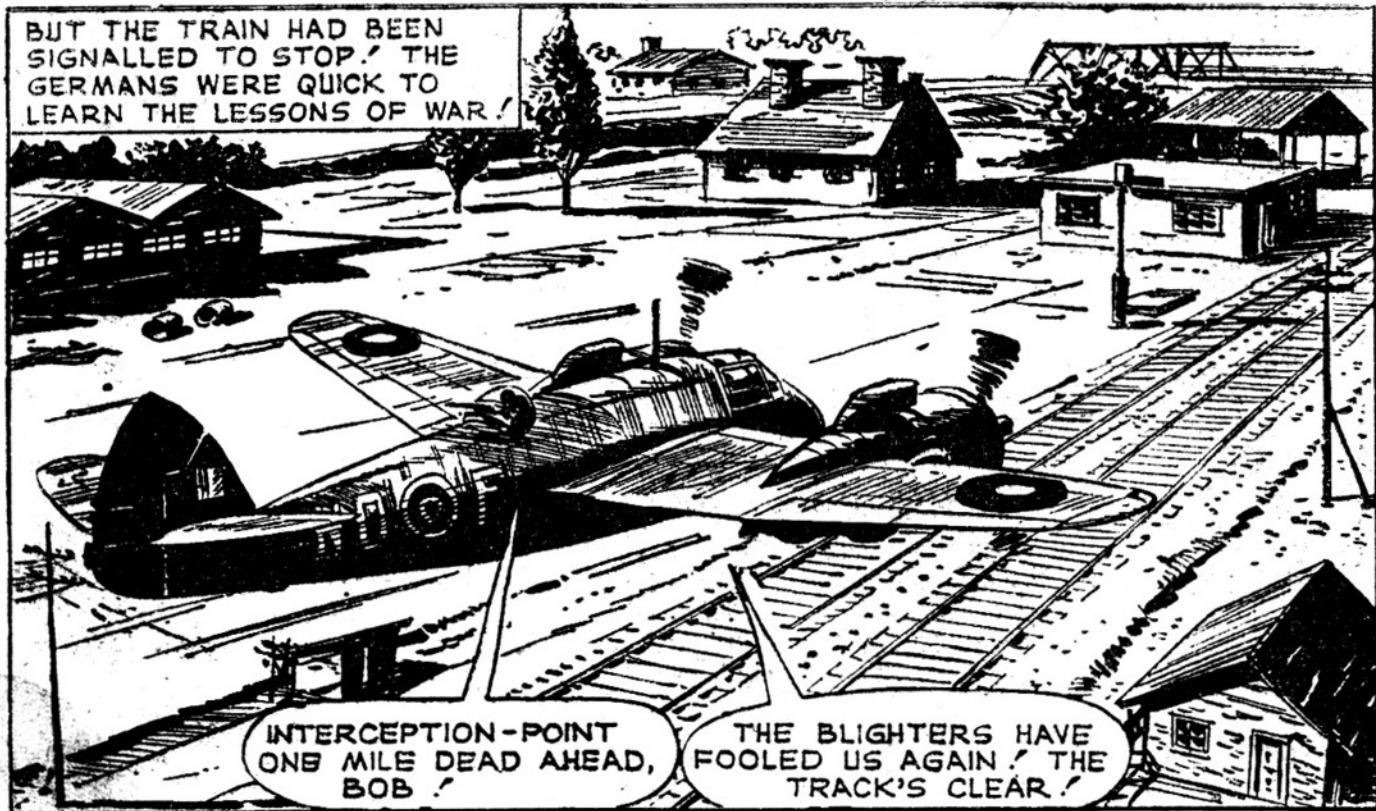
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THE BEAUFIGHTER THUNDERED DOWN TO ROOF-TOP HEIGHT AND WHEN ONE OF THE GERMAN FIGHTERS FAILED TO AVOID A SOARING STEEPLE, THE OTHERS GAVE UP THE PURSUIT . . .

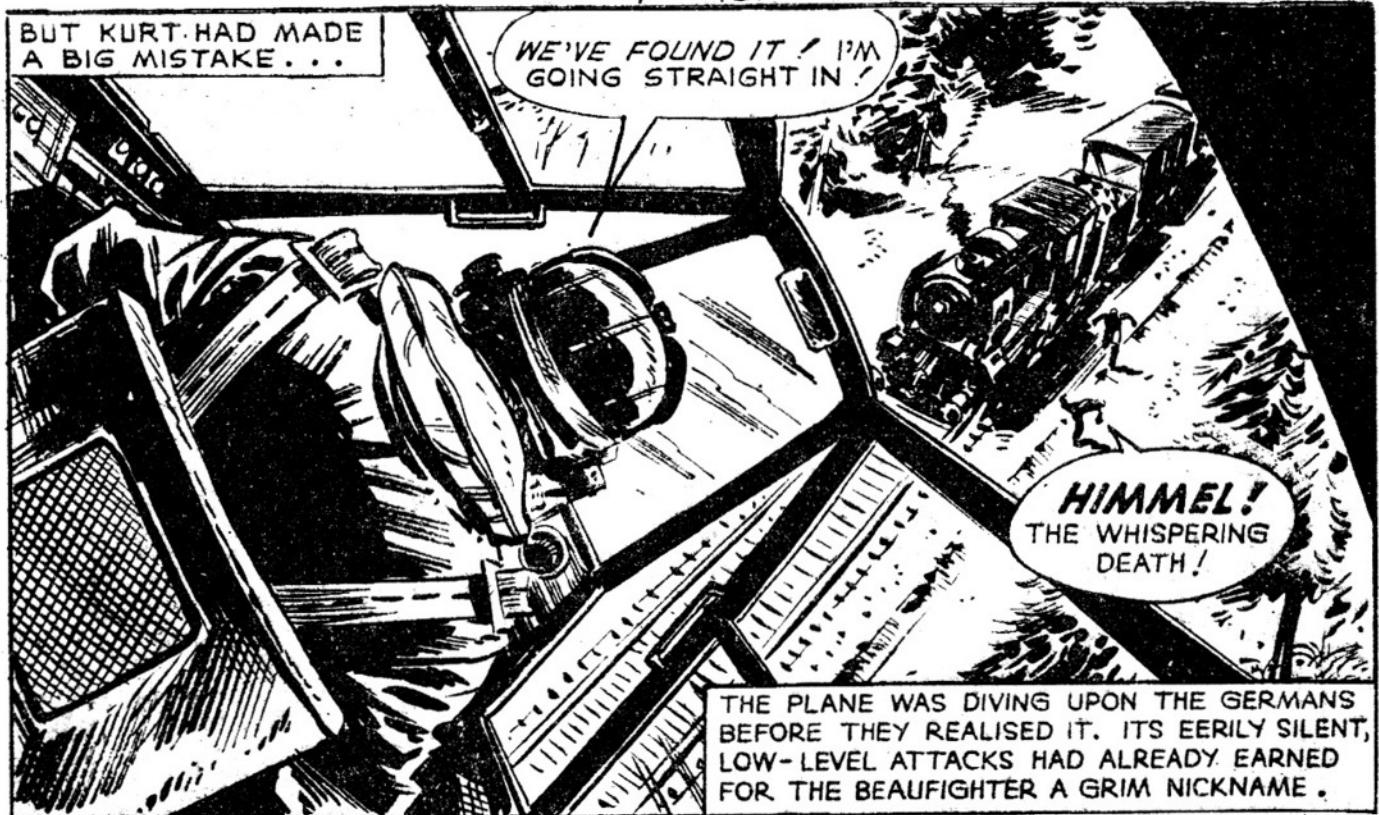


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BACK AT THE SQUADRON,
THE TENSION MOUNTED...



IT WAS ANOTHER HOUR BEFORE BOB'S BEAUFIGHTER LANDED AND THE FINAL TALE COULD BE TOLD . . .

WE WERE SITTING DUCKS, SIR.
I DON'T THINK ONE OF THE
OTHERS GOT AWAY FROM
THOSE MESSERSCHMITTS!



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THE SQUADRON'S MORALE WAS VERY LOW AND MOST OF THE CREWS FELT THAT BOB AND ANGUS WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE . . .

IT WAS A GRIM DAY WHEN HE ARRIVED ON THE SQUADRON. HE'S SENDING THE OLD MAN ROUND THE BEND !

THERE GOES DEATH-OR-GLORY DANVERS, THE PRIDE OF THE SERVICE !



LATER THAT MORNING, BOB DANVERS MADE A REQUEST TO THE STATION ADJUTANT . . .

I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE THE C.O., SIR . . . IF POSSIBLE !

HMM ! I'LL ASK HIM ! YOU'RE NOT VERY POPULAR JUST NOW, DANVERS !



BUT BOB WAS JUST THE MAN FAIRBORNE WANTED TO SEE. THE WING-COMMANDER FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL WOULD LEAVE THE SQUADRON ALONE AFTER THE OPERATION FIASCO AND HE WANTED TO EMPHASISE THE POINT . . .

SO YOU SEE, DANVERS, FROM NOW ON, WE'LL CARRY ON AS BEFORE ! THE JOB MAY BE HUM-DRUM BUT AT LEAST IT'LL GET DONE !



I AGREE, SIR ! BUT I WOULD LIKE TO PUT FORWARD ANOTHER IDEA . . .

The Whispering Death



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE THOUGHT THAT BOB WAS GOING TO SUGGEST SUICIDAL DAYLIGHT SWEEPS ON NIGHT FIGHTER AERODROMES. BUT HE WAS WRONG . . .



The Whispering Death

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AND SO... MUCH AGAINST WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE'S JUDGMENT... THE OPERATION PASSED THE PLANNING STAGE...

ONCE AGAIN, GENTLEMEN, PILOT OFFICER DANVERS HAS HAD A BRILLIANT IDEA! TONIGHT WE SHALL BE JOINED BY TWO MORE BEAUFIGHTER SQUADRONS! HERE'S THE FORM...



WHY DOESN'T THE OLD MAN POST DANVERS?

I DON'T KNOW - IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HAD A REAL BASH AT JERRY!

... SIGNALS WILL GIVE YOU THE APPROPRIATE JERRY R.T. FREQUENCIES AND CALL SIGNS! YOU MAKE YOUR OWN WAY OVER INDIVIDUALLY! TRY TO COME IN BEHIND JERRY AS HE LANDS OR TAKE A CRACK AT HIM AS HE PULLS UP HIS UNDERCART ON THE WAY UP! BUT, FOR PETE'S SAKE, DON'T SHOOT EACH OTHER DOWN!



The Whispering Death



The Whispering Death

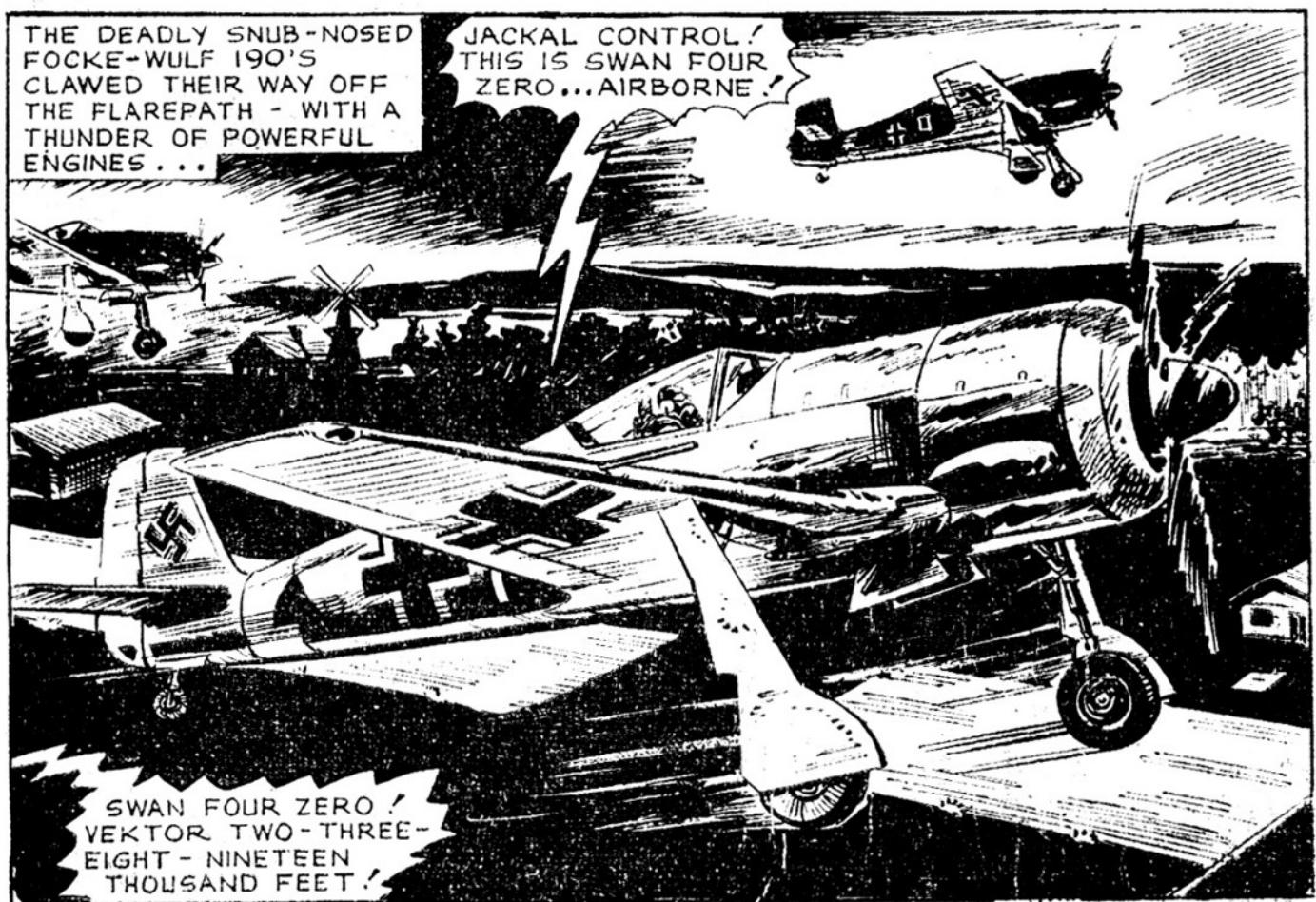
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ACROSS THE CHANNEL, AWAITING THE R.A.F.'S NIGHTLY BOMBER ONSLAUGHT, WAS THE 91ST. GERMAN NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON STATIONED NEAR APELDOORN, HOLLAND . . .

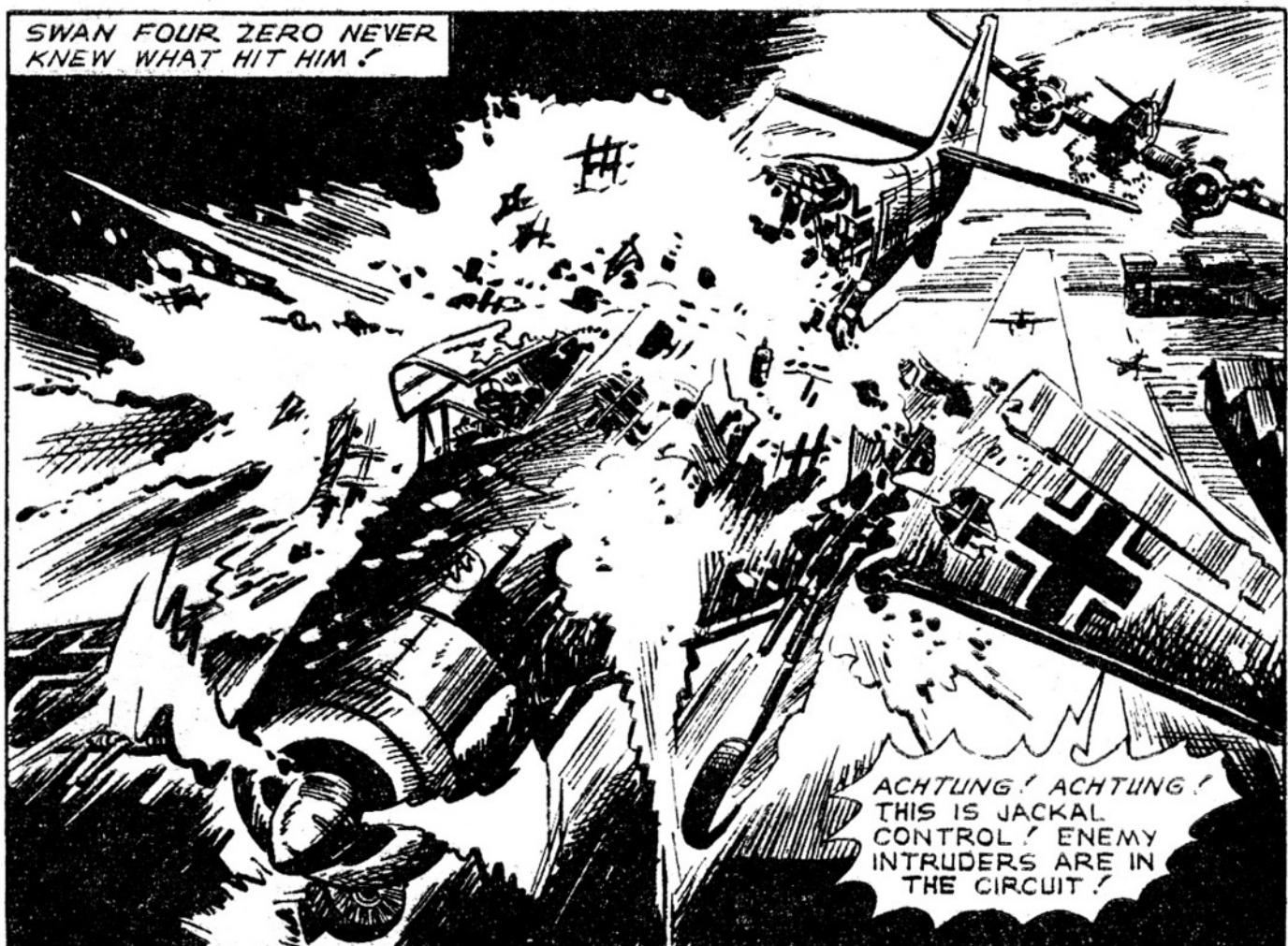


THE DEADLY SNUB-NOSED FOCKE-WULF 190'S CLAWED THEIR WAY OFF THE FLAREPATH - WITH A THUNDER OF POWERFUL ENGINES . . .

JACKAL CONTROL!
THIS IS SWAN FOUR ZERO...AIRBORNE!



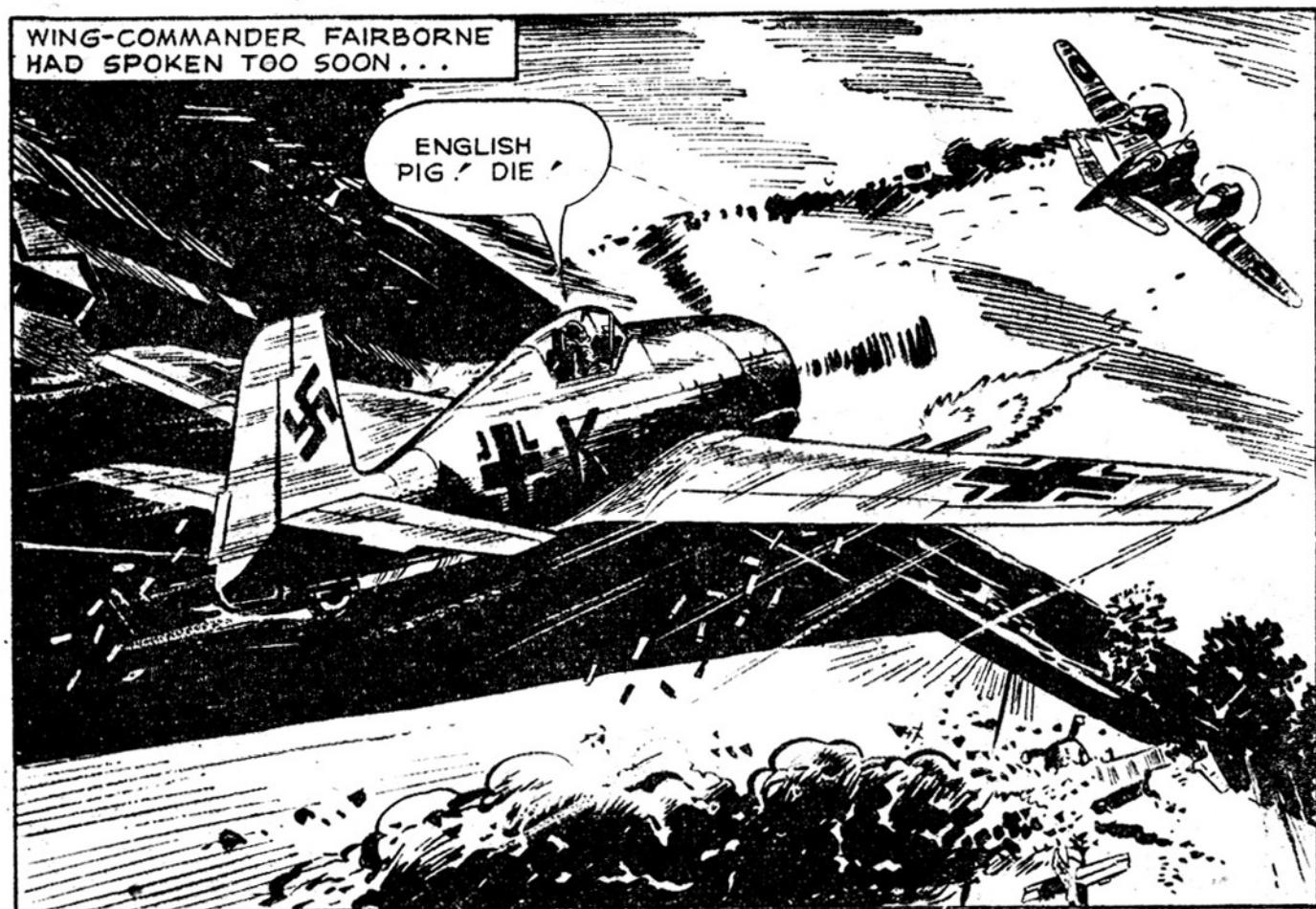
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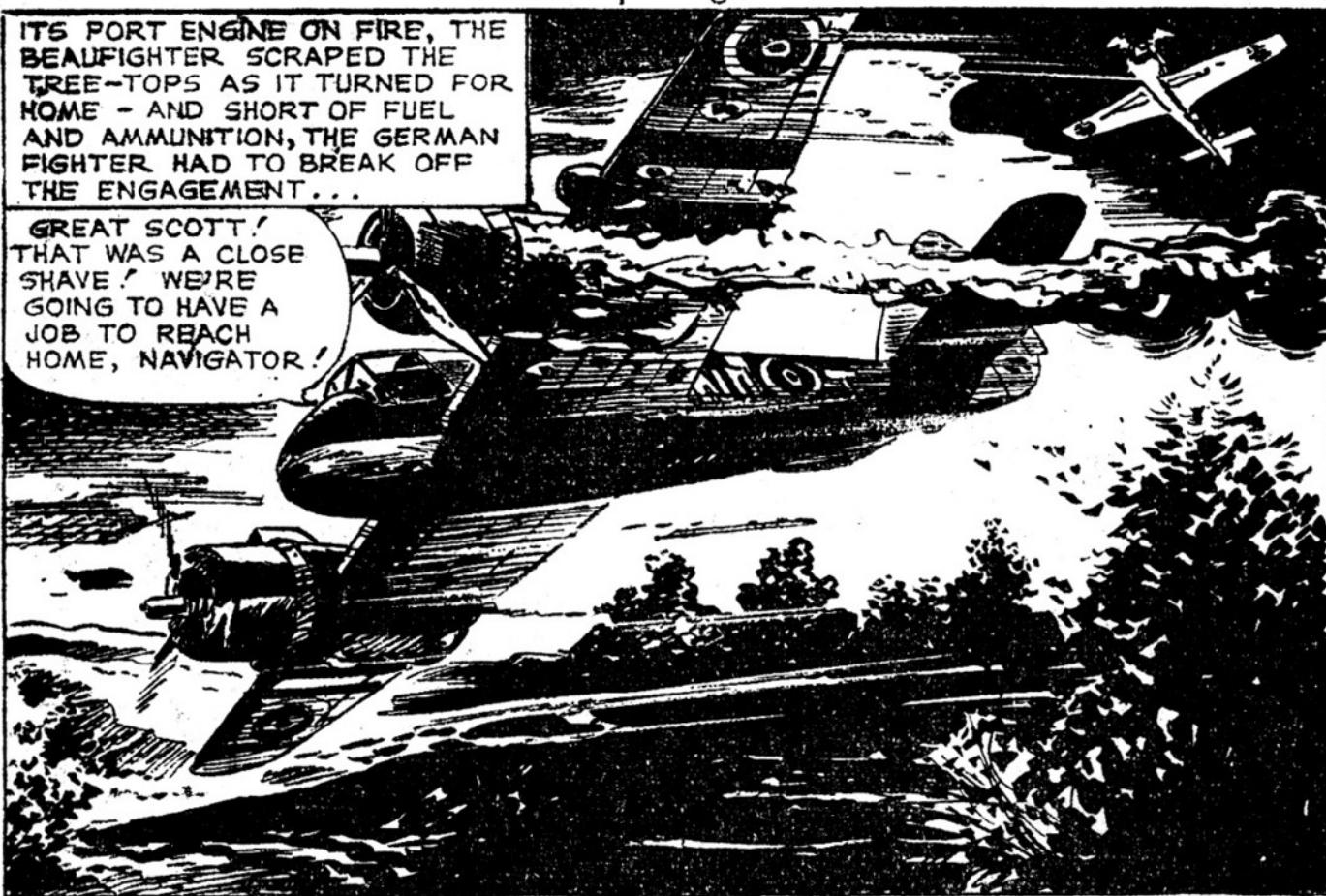
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BOB WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO MAKE A KILL! WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE FOLLOWED A HOMING GERMAN NIGHT FIGHTER INTO ITS FLAREPATH FUNNEL-APPROACH...



The Whispering Death



AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL LOST PATIENCE WITH HIS SUBORDINATE . . .

NOW YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME, WING-COMMANDER ! YOU'RE A DASHED JEREMIAH, SIR ! NO 'GO' AT ALL ! IT'LL BE SOME TIME BEFORE JERRY FINDS COUNTER MEASURES - AND THEN WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE ! NEXT TRIP, I INTEND TO FLY WITH THAT YOUNG FELLER, DANVERS - I WANT TO BE ABLE TO REPORT TO THE P.M. PERSONALLY ON THIS TECHNIQUE !



INWARDLY SEETHING WITH RAGE, FAIRBORNE STUMPED OFF TO INSPECT THE DAMAGE TO HIS AIRCRAFT . . .

(WHEN THIS INTERFERING BRASS-HAT GOES, DANVERS IS GOING TO WISH HE'D NEVER BEEN BORN ! A JEREMIAH, AM I ? WE'LL SEE ON THE NEXT TRIP !)



BOB AND ANGUS PASSED NEAR TO FAIRBORNE ON THE WAY TO THEIR QUARTERS...AND BOB COULD NOT RESIST A DIG AT HIS C.O.

I SAY ! NASTY MESS THEY MADE OF THAT PORT ENGINE, SIR !

YES, MISTER PERISHING DANVERS ! VERY NASTY ! I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE SATISFIED WHEN THE WHOLE SQUADRON'S BEEN MUTILATED BY THE HUNS !



The Whispering Death



The Whispering Death

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BOB HAD HAD ENOUGH! HE TURNED FURIOUSLY ON HIS MOCKERS . . .

ALL RIGHT, SO I'VE HAD SOME IDEAS! WE'RE IN A WAR, AREN'T WE? YOU ASK THE BOMBER BOYS - THEY'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT. THEY DON'T WORRY IF THE PAINT GETS SCRATCHED ON THEIR KITES! SOME OF YOU MAKE ME SICK!

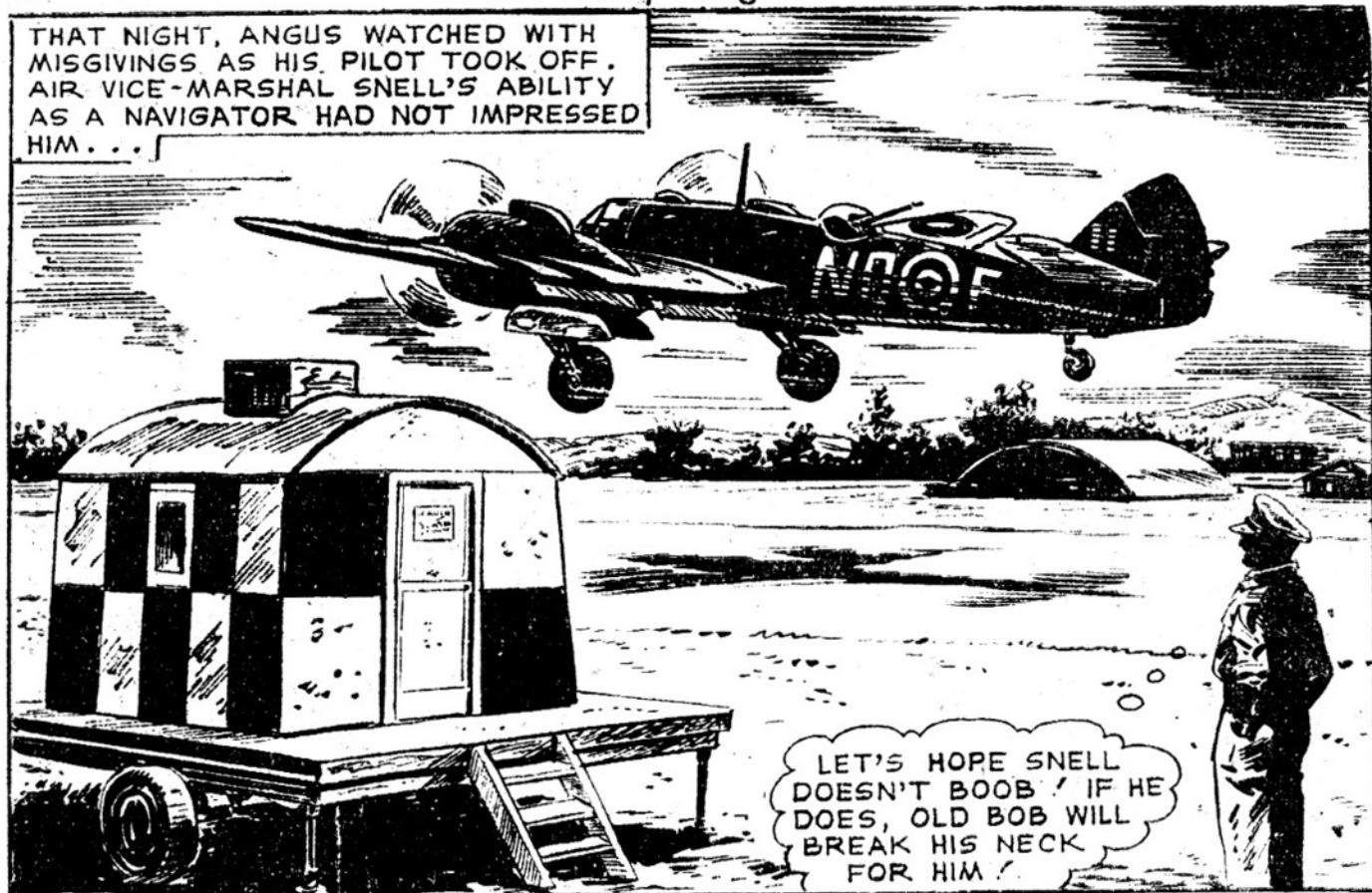


THAT AFTERNOON, AFTER BRIEFING, BOB AND ANGUS WENT OVER THE FLIGHT PLAN WITH SNELL. AIR VICE-MARSHAL OR NOT, BOB WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE SURE THAT HE KNEW HIS JOB . . .



The Whispering Death

THAT NIGHT, ANGUS WATCHED WITH MISGIVINGS AS HIS PILOT TOOK OFF. AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL'S ABILITY AS A NAVIGATOR HAD NOT IMPRESSED HIM . . .



THE BEAUFIGHTER, ONE OF MANY, SPED LOW OVER THE BLACK, UNFRIENDLY WATERS OF THE NORTH SEA. VISIBILITY WAS BAD . . .

HULLO, NAVIGATOR! HOPE THIS COURSE IS DEAD ON! IN THIS VISIBILITY WE'LL HAVE TO BE RIGHT ON THE BEAM!

...ER...YES, O-NINE-FIVE DEGREES!

CHECK! O-NINE-FIVE!



The Whispering Death

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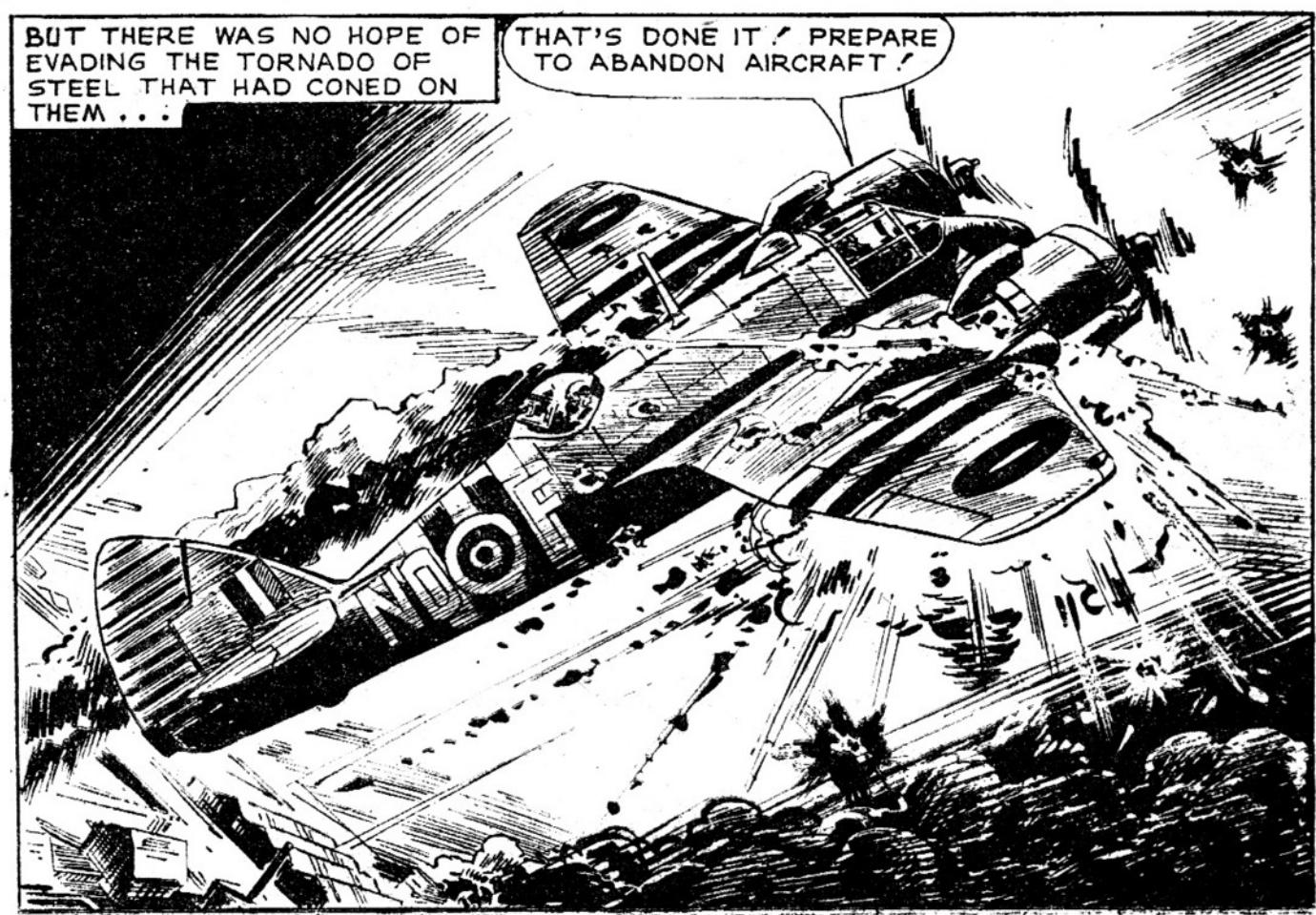
The Whispering Death

IT WAS THE HAGUE, 'HOLLAND. THE FLAK BATTERIES OPENED UP INSTANTLY AND THE SKY BECAME ALIVE WITH DEADLY, GLITTERING TRACER. BOB FLUNG THE BEAUFIGHTER THROUGH EVERY MANOEUVRE IN THE BOOK - AND A FEW MORE BESIDES!



BUT THERE WAS NO HOPE OF EVADING THE TORNADO OF STEEL THAT HAD CONED ON THEM . . .

THAT'S DONE IT! PREPARE TO ABANDON AIRCRAFT!



TWO HOURS LATER, WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WATCHED HIS SQUADRON RETURN TO BASE. ONE OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS MISSING ...

...BUT THEY CAN'T BE MISSING! AIR MINISTRY WILL CHOP ME IN LITTLE PIECES IF AN AIR VICE-MARSHAL IS MISSING!

PERHAPS THEY'VE HAD SOME ENGINE TROUBLE, SIR!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, THE LOSS WAS CONFIRMED. FAIRBORNE TOOK ANGUS ON AS HIS NAVIGATOR AND EVEN THE WING-COMMANDER FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO FORGET DEATH-OR-GLORY DANVERS. SOMETHING OF BOB'S SPIRIT WAS PRODDING THE SQUADRON INTO AGGRESSIVE MISSIONS THAT ONCE IT WOULD HAVE FLOWN A LONG WAY TO AVOID.



The Whispering Death



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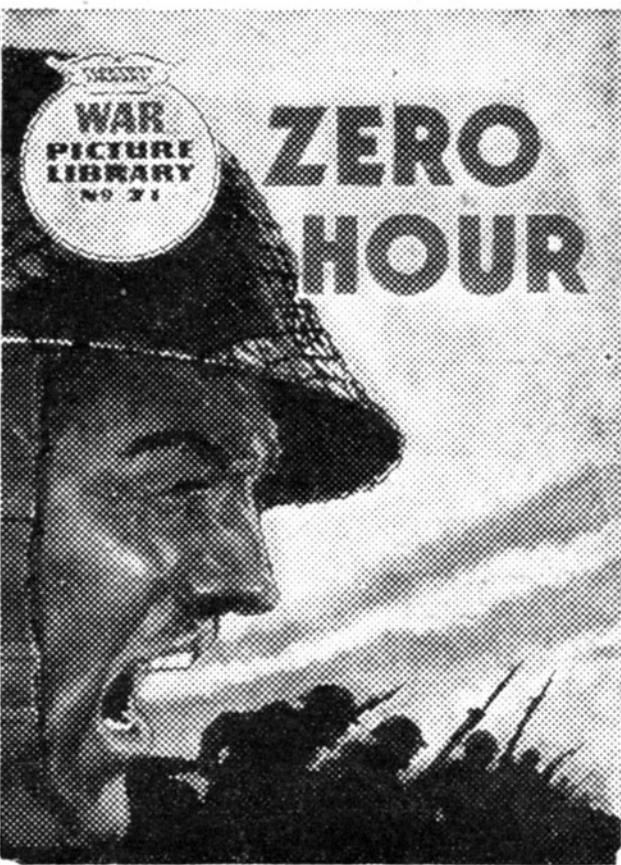
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